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"MISS X"

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By
REV. R. P. (BOB) SHULER
Pastor, Trinity Methodist Church
Los Angeles, California

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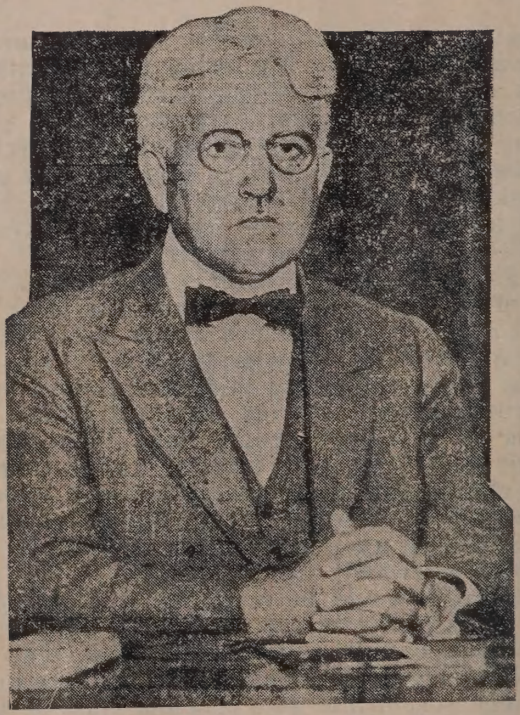
My Reason Why:

I was born under the shelter of Christianity. My mother was a Christian. My father and his father were ministers of the gospel. I consciously accepted Jesus Christ at nine years of age. I was licensed to preach at seventeen. As I stood at the altars of the church, I took a solemn and serious vow before God to do my utmost to drive back erroneous and strange doctrines. I have conceived it as my task to stand in defense of true Christianity through my life and ministry.

I am giving this little booklet to the public at this time because of the fact that some things should not be forgotten. I owe it to the Church of my mother to defend her against those who devour the loyalty and faith of thousands who worship God as did our fathers before us. Many churches have already been disrupted. Tens of thousands of Christian people have been dissatisfied with their early Christian training and the experience that the church has ever counted genuine. These have been drawn into the vortex of a gigantic emotionalism, have been played upon and preyed upon, have been exploited both spiritually and financially.

Therefore, I would be a craven, if I did not desire that the facts that are now out in the open be known and that they continue to be remembered. The warning should be sounded. Those whose itching palms are turning the very gospel into gate receipts must be halted in their greedy attempts. Cost what it may, I am determined not to spare myself or others that the Church of the Living Son of God and the souls of Christ's simple and poor be not made the implement and the victims of false prophets.

BOB SHULER.



JUDGE CARLOS S. HARDY,
to whom
this little booklet is affectionately dedicated.

PART I

Wherein there is contained a pen picture of the thinking of the thousands. We do not say it is true nor do we say it is false, but we do say that the people are thinking as the damaging preliminary concludes and it is our purpose in this chapter to give a brief portrayal of the tangled web their minds are thinking through and the goals toward which their minds are undoubtedly trending.

The Curtain Is Lifted

> *And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I shall search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them.*
>
> —*Amos 9:3.*

Miss X was "drowned" on May 18. On the afternoon of the same day she was kidnaped in a most spectacular manner from the beach where the "drowning" occurred. The "drowning" and kidnaping both took place with the beach full of people and at a time when such important events should never have been overlooked by the sightseers. However, even the faithful secretary of Miss X, whose duty it was to guard her as the apple of her eye, failed to take note of the "drowning," nor did she see the bold kidnapers come down to the water's edge and escort their victim, clad in her green bathing suit, to the car and the chloroform.

Thus it was that both the "drowning" and the kidnaping of this lady were of the most mysterious character.

When the faithful secretary at last discovered that Miss X had been "drowned" and kidnaped, she very quietly went about the task of publishing the one and for-

getting the other. There was wisdom born of training in this policy. Had she proclaimed the kidnaping, the very land would have been forthwith covered with searching parties. High-powered cars, bearing grim officers of the law, would have roared their way in every direction. The electric current would have carried the message to every town and hamlet in Southern California. It would have taken much wiser kidnapers than those who have thus far been discovered to have evaded detection and avoided arrest.

Therefore, the faithful secretary bethought herself to kindly forget the grim "Steve," with his terrible eye, and the nameless man with the sunken chest who sat crouching at the wheel, driving like mad, while "Rose" applied the chloroform with the freedom of one who had never examined the price tag.

But the announcement of the "drowning" was safer. It is hard for police cars to chase people through the deep, blue, friendly sea. However, the secretary, true to her training, did not immediately announce that her superior had journeyed to a watery grave. She took about two hours in meditation and in walking up and down the fateful beach. At last, however, she approached a gentleman who conducted a plunge at Ocean Park and told him that a friend of hers was missing. She did not happen to mention the name of the friend.

With the kidnapers safely on their way and two hours of mad driving behind them, it was possibly safe to announce the "drowning," and so the secretary made the announcement. That announcement was so made, however, that excitement might be prevented. There seemed to be no immediate need of any wild-eyed multitudes riding the roads in an effort to reach the beach and save the woman who had been so silently and secretly received into the bosom of the deep. It was perhaps four hours of sixty minutes each before any considerable number of people were aware that Miss X had found a watery grave. There was an advantage in being calm in hours of crisis! Surely, she was and is an ideal secretary!

When the mother of Miss X was notified that her talented daughter, while making a Sunday sermon (for Miss X, it would appear, is an "evangelist" of no mean reputation), had been swallowed up beneath the salt waters of the mighty Pacific, she went speedily about two matters. First, she busied herself in seeing to it that the car, in which her lost daughter had journeyed to the beach, was brought home. Second, she immediately began the preparation of her daughter's sermon that she herself might deliver it and take the collection on that evening. And this is why, within less than six hours of the "drowning," the mother of Miss X appeared before a packed Temple and gave her "drowned" daughter's message with a composure that few could explain and not everybody could appreciate.

Later, before the grand jury, the mother of the brilliant Miss X declared that she first became convinced that her daughter was drowned the morning after that important event transpired. Perhaps her tardiness in deciding that such a fate had met her offspring offers explanation as to why an immediate search was not instituted, as to why she did not rush hysterically to the beach as soon as the story was phoned her, as to why she calmly went about the matter of giving her "dead" daughter's sermon to the thousands who appeared that evening and as to why she took plenty of time to allow the newspaper cameras to reach the beach by the time she appeared to organize and conduct the most spectacular search for her famous daughter's body ever instituted since "drowning" and kidnaping were first discovered.

Seven long days elapsed with the mother of the "drowned" lady preaching, taking collections, insisting on the fact that her daughter was "in the arms of Jesus," before the financial head of the Temple appeared personally on the beach and it is doubtful if she would have then appeared had it not become necessary, for publicity purposes, that she make a greater show of her faith in the "drowning" of the "Prophetess."

Kidnapers Take Two Routes

One woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter.
—Rev. 9:12.

Meanwhile, the nameless man with the sunken chest sat crouching at his wheel through the weary hours. The roar of his car broke the still silence of the night. Beside him sat "Steve," the relentless. Behind him lay the limp body of a beautiful woman, while over her bent "Rose" with the bottle of chloroform in her hand. Hour after hour the car sped on. The hills and valleys of Southern California were left far behind. The roar of the breakers of the throbbing Pacific, into the blue depths of which Miss X had plunged, had long ago ceased to beat upon the ears of the kidnapers. With their charge safely unconscious and at their mercy, they wasted no words. Silently they kept their vigil, speeding through the night, while the mother of the beautiful lady preached her sermon and announced her death.

And on that same night another car was speeding. That car was speeding northward, for on May 14 a man with a bald front and a slight limp had rented a cottage where the murmur of the mighty ocean is ever in the ears of lovers. This man was of the romantic type. He had named the day and almost the hour when he would desire possession. He had arranged with neighbors that the milk man should be seen and that milk and cream should be ready on the morning of the 19th.

This man was a close friend of Miss X. His name had been linked with hers in whisperings. His wife had threatened to name the heroine of the Temple in a suit for divorce. More than one worker at the Temple had voiced suspicion. It was an ugly situation. But now that Miss X was "drowned," such horrible suspicions should be forgotten. And so it was that in the wee hours of the

gray morning, the car came through the fogs of Carmel, and Miss X, wearing her dark goggles and with her beautiful hair safely hidden from view, became the queen of the bungalow by the sea.

And the milk bottles were still unopened in the sun at nine o'clock that morning. A bright green bathing suit was hanging on the clothes line.

Just when the nameless man with the sunken chest drove up to the two-story house in the desert, the house with the private bath and lavatory, and where the kerosene lamp burned dimly, is not a matter of record. Perhaps he, too, arrived at his destination in the gray dawn. The night had been a long one, and the tense strain had left its mark. With sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, "Steve" lifted the unconscious form from the car. "Rose" still held the chloroform close. There must be no outcry. The job had not thus far been bungled. They laid her on the bed. The curtains were pulled.

When she awakened from that long sleep, she was as one coming out of the valley of death. She was sick, oh, so sick! "Rose" stooped above her. It was all so strange, so terrible!

And then "Steve" stood at the foot of the bed, the "Steve" with the terrible eye, the "Steve" who was gaunt and powerful. What could it all mean? And then broke the light. She had been kidnaped, stolen from her people, taken by brute force from her Temple! "Steve" proclaimed it. The thirst for gold was in his gloating. The very ring of the yellow stuff was in his voice. They had heard of her fabulous collections, of her growing bank accounts, of her success in financial matters pertaining to the Lord's work, and their greedy souls had coveted her wealth!

Thus dawned the horrible revelation upon her while the milk bottles still cooked in the sun at Carmel.

A Search for The Dead

Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.
—Prov. 20:17.

On the morning of May 19, the grief-stricken mother of Miss X began a search for the dead that will never be forgotten in Southern California. Thousands of weeping followers of the talented "evangelist" crowded the beach. Such excitement prevailed along the water's edge as has possibly never been known in all the histories of tragedies. There was a religious mania in action, intensified by the fact of a terrible disaster that had robbed these thousands of devotees of their beloved leader. Some dropped upon the sands to pray, their hands reached toward heaven. Some chanted snatches of songs that she had taught them. Some stood with eyes that sought the secrets of the beating tides, gazing through their tears out over the blue deep as though they expected any moment their leader to come walking back to them over the waves.

And as these multitudes wandered up and down the shore, weeping, some of them wailing aloud, praying, singing, sorrowing, brave men were daring the deep in a vain attempt to bring the body of the dead woman to her friends. The best divers that money could secure were searching the mysterious bottom of the sea. Flying machines were whirring overhead, searching, with high-powered glasses, the ocean's floor. Boats plied to and fro, anxious men gazing to right and left for any tell-tale evidence that might lead the searchers to her body. Glass-bottomed craft lazily drifted, with men peering through the glass into the deep. Southern California was awake at last. The news had spread. The alarm was no longer tardily sounded. The newspapers were full of the sensation.

And, through those days of search, men spared not themselves. Two gave their lives and went out to walk the paths which feet of men have never tried. They journeyed beyond the waves they sought to conquer and found the unseen shores while seeking for the body of the lost lady. Nor did they find her in the deep nor on the unseen shores.

The mother of Miss X had said, "Praise God; but what can we do?" when phoned by the keeper of the plunge that her daughter was drowned. But now that the body of the "evangelist" was being guarded by the silent denizens of the mighty deep, heaven rained assistance, and earth afforded the tens of thousands ready to risk life and limb for the rescue of that body. She was dead. Certainly, she was dead. Who could deny that she was dead? And when a doubt was expressed (and doubts were near blasphemous in that hour), the mother, whose brave eyes had been dry through this terrible ordeal, pronounced that doubt the very breath of hell, breathed forth to blast her dear daughter's name and wreck the work of God within the Temple.

And while they searched, the milk bottles were taken in out of the sun at Carmel, and a beautiful woman read her Bible in the seaside's mellow light that streamed through the vines that overhanged the window, while a man limped across the room to the radio and listened to the startling story of how the great "evangelist" was "in the arms of Jesus."

And while they searched, "Rose" sat by the side of the couch of her victim and heard the weak voice of the woman on the cot as she prayed for her and "Steve" and the nameless one with the sunken chest, until there was a tear unbidden in the hard eye of the criminal and her heart went out in love and sympathy for the "evangelist."

And while they searched, an angel took his field glasses from his eyes for a moment, scratched his head, and wondered if he was getting old and if his eyes were failing him.

The Faithful Keep Vigil

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.
—Jer. 17:9-10.

The days passed, and there came with the changes that time always brings the sordid voice of the doubter. Scores grew into hundreds and hundreds multiplied into thousands as men and women began to voice their conviction that the beautiful lady slept not with her fathers, shrouded in the garments of the deep. Strange theories were afloat. Stranger whisperings of past deceptions were being voiced to sustain the doubts of those who seemed to think a giant hoax was being perpetrated. Men told of other disappearances. The newspapers chronicled an occasion of the years gone by, when this same "evangelist" had suddenly ceased to be and when, in the days that followed, she wandered in, bedraggled, wretchedly worse for wear and telling a story as strange as the ears of men had ever heard.

These whisperings reached the ears of the mother of the dead, and her heart was sorely tried within her motherly bosom. The newspapers began to publish strange things and the mother heart was more deeply pierced. However, she was not a woman to silently submit. She branded these doubts as the very fulminations of perdition. She announced that enemies of her dead daughter were moving heaven and earth to bring the black tarnish of reproach upon the name of one now resting "in the arms of Jesus." She pictured the imp-like nature of those impious souls that would thus befoul the name of God's own Prophetess, now translated, and

whose body could not be found because Jesus had come down and claimed it from the deep.

And yet, though "Jesus had taken the body home," according to the mother, the search continued. Organized guards and bands of watchers were ever in evidence. These worked in relays. The beach was never without the solemn forms of those who prayed and chanted their weird requiems. Excitement became mania. Religious fervor grew into near insanity. Some threatened to go bodily into the deep after their beloved. One is said to have thrown himself into the ocean and to have gone to heaven grievously disappointed, no doubt, at not finding the "Prophetess" there.

Through it all, there was every evidence of loyalty that the mind of man could conceive. No one followed the events of those nights of watching without being convinced that the "evangelist" had bound to her, with bands stronger than steel, the souls of these simple-minded folk. No one watched the worshipers and searchers who walked the beach through the live-long day without recognizing a faithfulness and slave-like devotion perhaps unequaled in all the history of those who have led their armies, walked before their cohorts and directed the steps of their crusaders. The woman who lay in the deep, deep ocean's bed had gathered about her, as she lived, a multitude of those who would have gladly given their very lives for her.

And while the beach was lined with watchers, the altars of the Temple were crowded with those who prayed. They prayed for the soul of their leader in one breath, and in the next breath they prayed to their leader in heaven that their own souls might be kept.

And the man with the limp boarded a fast train and came down from Carmel, leaving the beautiful lady of mystery with her Bible on her lap. The man with the limp had heard over his radio that his name was being mentioned in connection with that of the "Prophetess." Therefore, he came down to embrace the mother of the dead and sympathize with her. He came down to say

that, while a jealous wife had proposed a suit of divorce, with the name of the "anointed of God" as co-respondent, yet there was nothing but falsehood in it. He came down to offer his assistance. He went away. He went away as suddenly as he came. He went away as mysteriously. And when he went away, he went all the way away. From that day to the day of this writing the man with the limp has not been located, save in his flitting here and there, through North Carolina, Virginia, New York, Chicago, Canada and elsewhere. He seems to have been given the wings of the morning and to dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth.

And while the man with the limp was weeping on the neck of the mother of the dead at their common loss, "Rose" kept vigil in the two-story house where the kerosene lamp burned dim in the room with the private bath. "Steve" was away on a sordid mission that had to do with his lust for yellow gold, and the nameless one with the sunken chest was with him. "Rose" and her prisoner sat through the long hours together. The woman of faith prayed with and talked to the woman of sin. It was the soul of the saint pitted against the soul of the tainted. And hour by hour the stony heart of "Rose" melted away.

Outside was the desert. Far away were the weeping followers. At Carmel was the lady with the Bible on her knees, who now and then read from a French history the story of Joan of Arc, so often compared by the "evangelist" to herself, or stopped, perchance, to listen to the pitiful appeal of the mother's voice over the radio, urging that the collection be bountiful so that they might "carry on." Near her lay a book from which the notes of a sermon on "Light and Darkness" had been taken, as the "Prophetess" sat on the beach.

Think how the heart of the beautiful Miss X must have grown tender when the mother of the "Prophetess" arose, after the fruitless search had dragged for days, and spoke as follows:

"However, when she returned (speaking of her European trip), hundreds of people said, 'That is not the sister who went away.'

Court records flare out before the public the astounding information that the above photo of Aimee Semple McPherson, posing with Loraine Wiseman Sielaff, was for the purpose of putting over a gigantic hoax upon the public.

More than $100 was said to have been spent in securing the photographs by which the likeness between Mrs. McPherson and Mrs. Sielaff was to have been brought to the public. Mrs. McPherson paid the bill.

The above photograph of Mrs. McPherson and Mrs. Sielaff, instead of becoming conclusive of Mrs. McPherson's innocence, now stands out as conclusive evidence of her guilt. Note that in none of these pictures is the false hair of the "Prophetess" piled high as when she ministers in the name of the Lord.

No, it wasn't. She was different. There was something almost etherial about her when she stood on the platform. We could not persuade her to talk about business. Just a few days ago I tried to interest her in the improvement of the foyer, which she always loved to have beautiful; but she just smiled and said nothing. I tried to interest her in the lights of the new school. She looked at them and smiled and said they were very pretty, but she never entered into any business of any kind. Her great thought was to get the souls to the altar and to speak to the students. Only the other day, in the Bible School, she said, 'Would you all carry on if the Lord took me home?' * * * * * * When she preached the sermon of the Scarlet Thread, you could fairly see the light around her body as she stood there on the platform. God was preparing her for that heavenly home; and if Sister could have chosen a thousand ways to go, I believe it would have been just the way she was taken. The moment Brother Arthur told me, I knew she was with Jesus. * * * Of all the ways we can think of, there could not have been a more lovely one—without pain, without struggle, without agony, one minute in the body and the next minute with the Lord. * * * * She taught us not only how to live but how to die. * * * * Let not anything that is reported excite us. Let us endeavor to take this thing as upstanding men and women who wait upon the Lord. It won't be long before we,too, shall go where she has gone. * * * * She always tried to pattern her life after that of the Savior, and hers has been a remarkable parallel to His in the length of life, of ministry, and of the loving tenderness, compassion and understanding which the world has seen in her."

And as the mother spoke, heroically holding back her grief, her dry eyes gleaming with the great resolve of the leadership that she proclaimed God had given to her, upon the death of her daughter, "a double portion" of the spirit of the daughter having fallen upon her, "Rose" dragged slowly about the two-story house with the kerosene lamp and the private bath, washing the supper dishes and uttering now and then her first broken prayer of penitence, praying that she might some day be worthy of the comradeship of the angelic lady upon the couch in the other room.

Steve—he of the cruel eye—sat with his chin in his hand, thinking of the pile of yellow stuff, the price of his captive, while the strange man with the sunken chest coughed his hectic, hack-saw bark and the desert sent back the echo as though the coyotes were abroad on the sandy wastes without.

Uneasy Sits the Carmel Love-Lady

> *Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friend.*
>
> —*John 15:13.*

Two men had passed on into eternity searching for the body of the dead. Their stricken families looked into their drawn, cold faces. Their little children cried in the dark outside the rooms where lay the forms of those who counted life not a precious thing in the hour when the body of the "Prophetess" lay lonely in the deep.

Messages of condolence had arrived from Dr. Munhall, Judge Ben D. Lindsey, Rev. Paul Rader, Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, Dr. Frank Norris and scores of others.

Dr. J. Whitcomb Brougher, the advocate of the "Prophetess" from the beginning, had wired these words:

Greatly grieved at tragic going. * * * A calamity God alone can understand. We know God loves us and can only say, "Thy will be done." May the comfort wherewith you have comforted others be your comfort today. You and congregation have my sincere sympathy and earnest prayers.

Dr. Bruce Brown had led a fitting expression of condolence and sympathy from the Ministerial Union of Los Angeles, and the mother of the "evangelist" had read this encomium from the platform, to the joy of her stricken followers.

Judge Carlos S. Hardy, the peerless advisor of the Lord's chosen, arose and stated that his "friend with the radiant smile" had gone to be with Jesus.

Scores of such comments came in from all sides and were finally summed up in the Foursquare Gospel Revival News in the following language:

THE FATHER BECKONED: At the gateway of the City of Light the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the Creator of the Universe and the loving Father of the redeemed stood pondering.

Far below He could see His children, living out the little span of life alloted them. He saw many that were lost in the swirl of mortal duties, others drifting hither and yon as rudderless ships, while many were diligently fulfilling their earthly ministry. His eye fell upon one, standing out 'mongst many others, who was busily working away with a song in her heart and a smile on her lips. Her work never ceased, but her eyes constantly lifted up to the gates where the Father kept watch.

"She is a faithful worker and 'tis my vineyard in which she labors. The work I have given her to do she has carried out. Methinks she has been loaned to the world long enough."

With one sweep of His majestic hand the glistening gates swung open. At the command of His voice the great ropes which rung the Golden Bells of Heaven were grasped in willing hands. Peal after peal of glad, triumphant melody floated out and through the gateway, finding an echo in the heart of the happy toiler below. A myriad angel host swept through the open gate and down, escorting another soul from the narrow confines of Time into the unlimited possibilities of Eternity.

With a cheery smile, carefree words and a heart of happiness she finished her appointed task and went away.

Her going has left an ache in the heart of the world, we felt that we needed her so. But God in His infinite wisdom must have found a greater need in Heaven, else He would not have taken back the gift He gave to the world and blessed so abundantly.

We cannot know, nor hope to understand His ways, our vision is so small and 'compassed about with childish human things, but when we remember our Sister's longing to be with her Savior and the picture of Heaven's bright glory that her lips so vividly painted, we can but say,

"Amen, Jesus! We know that she is looking upon Thy face today and that Thy name is upon her forehead. We know that she needeth no candle nor light of sun upon her pathway, but the Lord God giveth her light eternally and she shall reign with Thee forever and ever."

The radio carried these messages. The daily papers heralded them. How the proud heart of the lady behind the bungalow vines must have bounded! Fitting indeed were these eulogies of the dead. For was she not the Lord's anointed? Had not her mother prayed for her coming and did not God witness to His decision to give the answer by sending over the Canadian hills a shaft of light? Was she not a child of the Supernatural power? Did she not come the way of the world as a miracle of the eternal? Had she not been more than one time miraculously and instantly cured, once of a broken

ankle, by the power of her God? Had not God afflicted her until she promised to leave her husband for Him, and had this same God not given her perfect health and strange power in preaching since the day she abandoned the marriage relation? Why not a great and bouyant joy as she sat with the curtain drawn where Carmel-by-the-sea basks in the sunlight of the dying day? Had not the world worshipped her while she lived? And did not the world worship even more fervently, now that she was dead?

And yet, the crown of glory sat heavy on her head. Strange stories were afloat. Men of flesh, whose minds possessed uncanny powers of analysis, were saying quite positively that the dead would come to life. These men were not looking for an angel to come walking over the waters to the Temple. They were not expecting a great fish to vomit out the "Prophetess" on the bank. Theirs was not the beholding of a miracle. These blunt fellows were wagging their heads and discussing the possibility of a hoax. Certainly, they were very earthy men, but undoubtedly, being earthy, they were wondrously worldly wise.

In the meantime, the man with the lifted dome and the limp quite noticeable was flitting here and there. He seemed anxious and nervous. Quite early in the "drowning" he had sent the mother of the dead a consoling telegram, notifying her that the daughter was quite well and happy. And now he was dodging about through the northern cities, only spending such time as he could spend between-times with the fair one in the bungalow.

And that is why the heart of the fair one became lonely and a little ache was born within it. What is the use of glory unless you are there to receive? What corpse could really enjoy the radio praise that came daily from the Temple? Especially, how could such praise lift the heart to ecstasy when the very atmosphere was being surcharged not only with doubt but with scandal? Stories were afloat that were no longer simply strange. They were horrible.

How could the fair one be happy behind the vines as she listened to a mother berating at every service certain un-named accusers, referring to the fact that scandal-mongers were seeking to tear down the name of a sainted daughter dead! Surely the thing was not "breaking" right. There was a fly in the ointment, and it was a different fly. It was the kind of fly that follows the dead.

And so when the telegram arrived from the man with the slight limp that they must move on to their dying mother in the east, the lady of the be-goggled eyes was ready for the journey. The Bible had not seemed the same as in the olden days. The radio had not proved itself a success. The "drowning" was drying up and withering as withers a green leaf. Something had to be done, and it could not wait. People were growing inquisitive; too inquisitive, by far.

Thus it was that through the night they journeyed out of Carmel, the lover and the loved. Thus it was that the man of the radio wave-length, with the limp that would not down, sat in the car side by side with the woman of mystery. They drove southward. They drove toward Ocean Park. They drove toward the briny grave where slept the "Prophetess." They drove toward the dry-eyed mother who had "carried on." They drove toward the multitudes who chanted of the beloved "in the arms of Jesus." They drove through the night. They seemed to love the night. Always, they drove through the night.

And as they drove, "Rose" sat beside the couch where lay the languid form of the prisoner. Poor "Rose" was smitten in her heart as she looked into the sweet face before her. Could even the good, tender, merciful God of the sleeper forgive so wretched a sinner as she? For the captive was sleeping, sleeping like a little child.

Thus it was that "Rose" remembered the prayer of her baby days and whispered, "Now I lay me down to sleep," as the lovely prisoner moved restlessly and muttered something about "my people" and "my darling little mother."

Back to the City of Angels and Else

> *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, etc.*
> —*Gal. 6:7.*

And thus it was that the man with the limp and the beautiful Miss X came back into the great city where the tourists gather, where the City Boss is Pope and King combined, and where the Gambling Barons own all that they survey—within their gambling halls and up at the city hall as well. Miss X came back like the prodigal son, except not so flourishingly. There was no killing of a fatted calf. She arrived when the night was at its silentest. Her steps fell lightly on the hallway. At last she was sheltered. About her were kind friends—just a few. Too many might be embarrassing at some future time. The man with the limp was gone. He was "beating it" for the east. He had been in the west too long already.

There was a meeting. It will never be forgotten. It was the meeting between two women. It was the meeting between a woman who had been proclaimed "in the arms of Jesus" and another who had "carried on." Angels stopped their ears during that meeting, for, while the words were uttered in subdued voices, they were fearful words.

Then came the season of hiding. Meals were carried to the room on the street that has four syllables. The rightful occupant of that room was indeed a nurse. But she was gone. Her car was also gone. She was driving east, driving east across the desert to still more desert, driving to where there was a friend who would help in such an hour as this.

The story had been builded and she must make the circumstances that were to be fitted in. She must find a hut. She must note well the lay of the land. She must

scout about a Mexican village. She must map out a path. And when her work was done she must drive back into the red of the setting sun and bring the lady of the Carmel bungalow to the gray sand dunes and wide reaches of biting night breezes, when the dust of the desert granite is in the air.

The Bible and the story of Joan of Arc lay lonely behind deserted vines that had guarded the strange woman with the eyes that would not bear the light of day. Already there were whisperings of her identity. More than one had seen her, and they looked wisely at each other. They, too, spoke in subdued voices, for their secret was of a deadly kind. They could not themselves believe that what they half believed was true. And the radio was "tuned in" no more, the radio that had carried the story of the woman who "lay in the arms of Jesus." It was broken. Its work was done.

Such is the strange story of the interim, the story of those days when meals were carried in, the story of those nights when the thousands prayed and chanted and shouted their "hallelujahs" at the Temple while the lady of mystery sat behind drawn blinds almost within hearing distance of their voices.

Yes, this is the story of those days when the mother organized and sent to the beach, day by day, her parties of earnest searchers. This is the story of those days when the mother, afternoon and night, told and re-told the story of the dead, of her glorious life and ministry while she preached and ministered. This is the story of the days while the collections were being taken and the urgent appeal was being made to "carry on." This is the story of the days when the memorial service was planned and the "lifting" of the thousands of golden eagles was dreamed of. And this is the story of the days when the beautiful lady of the love bungalow was tenderly cared for and ministered to on the street that has four syllables.

The task being completed, the nurse in the car that e'er this has made a reputation came back from the desert. Her car was dust-covered. Her garments showed

marks of the journey. A few hours' interim. Again the night was on. The holy hush of midnight prevailed. And, through it all, the car that had journeyed west now journeyed east, and in it there was no longer a lonely nurse. She had a companion. They were headed for the wide desert and for the friend.

And it was possibly on this very night that the cruel "Steve," with the depraved instinct and the crime-lit eye, decided to move from the two-story house. Possibly through this same midnight darkness, there sped the car that bore the prostrate prisoner deeper into the sandy wastes, followed by the second car, at the wheel of which crouched the nameless one with the sunken chest. And in the blackness of that darkness, the conscience of "Rose" smote her as never before. "Rose," too, was a nurse. "Rose" was bad, oh, so bad, and yet not all the sympathy and human kindness was gone from her breast.

On and on went the car, and now and then Miss X would speak some word of inquiry. But it was too dark to talk. And one's voice sounds too loud in the darkness of the morning watches. The nurse at the wheel said little. Hers was the grim task. She had spied out the land. It was the only land of promise now ahead. And so on and on they drove through the desert and toward the desert far away, and the friend.

On and on sped the cars; the car where the prisoner lay, sleeping fitfully; the car where the grim kidnapers kept vigil; the car where "Steve," the man of a mighty passion for gold, held the wheel; and the car that followed, with the man of the sunken chest slumping ever in his lonely seat.

And "Rose," perchance, dropped a tear unseen into the night as she gazed at the form of the sleeping victim at her feet. "Rose" had heard her lisp the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," until her heart was all but broken.

The Resurrection Comes at Last

> *The time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy let him be filthy still.*
>
> *—Rev. 22:10-11.*

Temple, after they had in their possession positive proof that the dead was alive and that the "Prophetess" was still in the body. I do not here refer to the fact that some had seen her eye to eye in the house that stands on the street with four syllables, but I refer to the letter that had come from cruel "Steve" and the nameless man with the sunken chest, in which letter positive proof had been given.

The resurrection came exactly when it should have come. It came after the memorial service. It came after the memorial service that was held by the leaders of the Temple, after they had in their

The resurrection came after the reward of $25,000 had been withdrawn. That also was fitting. Why should the Temple leaders be forced to pay almost one-half of the memorial offering to some Mexican who happened to be the first to see the resurrected "Prophetess"?

The kidnapers who, in their lengthy letter, had given all the evidence necessary for their own conviction, referred to the fact that it had seemed to them there was an angel in their car while they drove "like hell." The resurrection morning found that "angel" at the slaughter house near Agua Prieta, walking with quick and alert strides, according to the German proprietor, and traveling in good form toward the lights ahead. June 23 was the day of resurrection. It is a day never to be forgotten, because upon that day came the prisoner staggering from the desert hut through twenty miles of thorns and cactus to meet and melt into the Miss X who in the early hours of that night had been driven over the border

to stage the "come-back" and get ready for the publicity.

There were indeed strange circumstances attending the resurrection. The nurse in the Douglas hospital was amazed to find the "Prophetess" alert rather than prostrate, so alert, indeed, that she was intensely interested in the necessary cosmetics and the preparation that by all means must be made for the newspaper reporters and the camera men. She was further amazed at the eagerness of the "Prophetess," after her twenty-mile desert hike, to have all callers admitted and to tell her story of Canadian-born prowess in crossing, without thirst or scratch, without sunburn or parched lips, without cactus mark or prick of mesquite thorn, the twenty-mile stretch of desert waste that lay between the hospital in Douglas and the hut that has never been found.

The rejoicing of those who heard with glad ears that the dead was alive has never been eclipsed in Southern California. The message of Judge Carlos S. Hardy, whose interest in this entire situation has reached the very innermost processes of the Superior Courts of Los Angeles county, had this to say:

"It is indeed a great pleasure to be here under these joyful and happy circumstances. We have many things to rejoice over, but one stands out very prominently. None can deny that while our Pastor was gone we lifted the standard high and "carried on" like true soldiers of the Cross. We saw the power of God continue to move among His people and we know thereby that the world has been touched by that which has been made manifest during the many days of her absence.

"We rejoice for another reason, the greatest reason of all—God's arm has not been shortened. The devil in all his work has not been able to conquer, but has failed. The evil that men would do has been overcome, and God has shown His strength, His power and His love in giving back to us all our dear friend and leader—the Pastor of this church.

"God has been proving Himself for many years here. He has been redeeming people from sin, sickness, sorrow and all manner of evil. There are thousands here who have received redemption at His hands and tonight He is proving once more His power and readiness. Your Sister has come back from the desert, back from the hands of kidnapers, from those who would destroy her work. She has been brought back to her friends even as Daniel out of the lions' den, as the Hebrew children out of the fiery furnace or Job

from his suffering. For this reason we rejoice mightily in the outburst of appreciation and love which has come from every heart.

"Let us ever give thanks to God, and bind ourselves closer to Christ, our Leader, Whom she has declared from the very first as being sufficient for our needs."

In the "Foursquare Gospel Revival News" are to be found the words of the mother of the "evangelist" as she pictured the sufferings of the woman of mystery:

"I know her well, and she will never tell you all she went through. Her heart suffered those long, long days, suffered bravely, and she has smilingly faced the world again. You, too, have crowded down your sorrow, saying the one word—'Carry on!'

"Greater love hath no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends. She was willing to lay down her life rather than have us sacrifice for her. The ransom price was $500,000.00. Impossible! Yet, had she but spoken the word, her dear, loyal, faithful Temple members and friends all over the world would have put forth every effort to set her free.

"She belonged to Jesus and to her people. Not for any sum of money would she plunge them into debt and take her freedom! She had never 'sold out' and she never would. Just as the Savior, never flinching or murmuring, went all the way to Calvary, shed the last drop of blood in His precious body, that we might be redeemed, ransomed us from sin and the devil—paid the price—just so did our precious Sister McPherson pay the price! They could burn her fingers with cigars—that did not matter! They could bind her arms with ropes until it seemed the blood would ooze out—she would not say anything! No matter if they did gag her so that she could not open her mouth—she would not give in or let us know she was alive. Jesus would not forsake her, and when the time came would deliver, she knew. She would rather die than to plunge us under such a great debt—an unjust account so that neither pastor or people could be free to preach the gospel.

"God answered her cry. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was her refuge. Like Daniel in the den of lions, the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Peter in prison—God was her refuge and help. He was present in her time of trouble. Just as truly as in days of yore He came and delivered her, placing her again in the hands of those who loved her, leaving her free to preach her beloved Foursquare gospel."

Thus came the "Prophetess" of the "latter rains" to the crest of her popularity and power, while the Bible in the Carmel bungalow lay dust-covered and the story of Joan of Arc found no other friendly eyes to peruse it. Thus there triumphantly returned to the city of the

angels and to her flower-burdened Temple the feminine wizard who has known how to lead her multitudes to lay their all at her feet. Those feet pressed the rose carpets that were spread on the pavements for her to walk on. She looked about her as she entered the city of her fame and saw the fire department, the police department, the officials of every walk of life, met to do her homage. Fifty thousand people cheered and sang and shouted!

And through a North Carolina town there limped a bald-headed man. He bought a newspaper and read it eagerly. He smiled. He sat down in a hotel chair, leaned back and dreamed awhile. He saw in the mists of the far away west the face of a woman. There were large, dark goggles over her eyes. Her hair was carefully covered. She was reading her Bible by the lights of the bungalow. And then he seemed to hear the radio message. It was a man's voice. The goggled lady stirred. She lifted her eyes from her Bible and listened. Judge Carlos S. Hardy was pronouncing a eulogy on the dead. He was exhorting his fellow bereaved to trust in God in the dark hours that had come. The lady with the goggles arose and walked to the side of the man with the spacious dome. She placed her hand on his shoulder. She called him "Kenny" and smiled down at him, and he smiled up at her.

Then he awoke from his dreaming and limped across the lobby. A smile of content that all was well was on his face, and yet there was a tinge of sadness in it, for he had just read from the paper in his hand how the Judge had welcomed her back at the station as the thousands cheered.

And then it was that the angel with the field glasses smiled as he carefully wiped the dust from the left lens. It was a little, weary, downcast smile. "And the little cripple had been a pretty square sort," he half muttered to himself. "Of course, I understand the Judge, but the radio man—oh, well! Put a question mark after that. I want to investigate a little further," he remarked to the angel who keeps the records.

PART II

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

When Aimee Semple McPherson made her journey over the mats of roses and the sidewalks strewn with California flowers, coming back into her Temple, the heroine of all hearts and the idol of Southern California, she was in a position as invulnerable perhaps as was ever occupied by any religious leader of the world. While thousands had not believed her drowned and while they stood as doubtfully beholding her kidnaping story, flared out before them in the papers, yet these same thousands felt themselves all but irresistibly drawn into the mad whirl of enthusiasm that marked her return "from the dead." She might not be telling the truth, but she was "putting it over," and the whole world admires the one who can "put it over." Such was the situation.

The newspapers had shown themselves her friends and boosters to the last syllable. They had "played" her story in magnificent fashion. They had pictured her love for little children, a love that caused her to so far forget herself as to trust the hypocritical "Rose" and go willingly to the waiting auto that she might pray with the little darling as it went out into eternity to play on the green lawns of God. They had given the vivid picture of her suffering while held captive, the brutal burning of her fingers that the secrets of her childhood might be wrung from her. They had almost sobbed through their columns as they had recited the story of the staggering woman who ran through the night, through the thorns, through the cactus, falling, lying prone upon the sand, rising to flee again like a wounded thing. Never did newspapers play their part more perfectly.

And the public officials had not failed her. Not an

officer of Los Angeles county or city who touched the case failed to touch it sympathetically. Detective Cline, hard, brusque, rough man that he is, was almost tender in his guarding of this woman as she lay on her bed in Douglas. He attended her constantly. He saw to it that the police department of Los Angeles welcomed her and accorded her every courtesy that belonged to one so renowned. He accepted her story and publicly declared his faith in her and in every word she had spoken.

Asa Keyes, District Attorney of Los Angeles county, did not fail to respond with equal enthusiasm. She had supported him for election, calling her political following into his camp, and now the hour had come to reward her. Nor was he tardy in so doing. Not a suspicion was publicly expressed. The effort to discover her kidnapers was honestly undertaken, and even when Mr. Keyes had discovered the impossibility of her kidnaping story, though he stated to her face that he did not believe it, he also advised her to "keep quiet," go on about her business, and stated that he would do nothing whatsoever to embarrass her, as her offense was possibly a simple misdemeanor and therefore would be ignored by him.

Superior judges who had long been her warm friends and allies were not slow to surround her, welcome her in public addresses and otherwise permit her to know that their interest was wholehearted and their faith in her absolute.

Therefore, she stood invulnerable. It was Aimee Semple McPherson who first raised the question mark.

When a newspaper reporter at Douglas happened in the most accidental manner to refer to the kidnaping as a "mystery," the reference went like a dart to the conscience of the "evangelist." Her resentment was with such heat as to be unmistakable. She seemed to think the remark a challenge, and immediately began the task of defending herself. That defense cost her her case.

Another remark had a telling effect upon the keen reporters present. When her mother and friends ar-

rived, one of her first questions was: "Will my people be glad to have me back?" What a question! Why that question? Can any human being remotely picture a reason for such a question outside of some heart-known secret hidden deep within?

Added to these two seemingly trivial but most telling circumstances came the ever-persistent mania of the "Prophetess" for voting her friends on her story. Everywhere, she must have a show of hands of those who believed her. Long before anyone had questioned her story in any public manner, she seemed to see the finger of accusation pointing, and her reply was very naturally the calling for a vote of confidence. She took such a vote in Douglas. She took a similar vote as she passed through Colton. She seemed to need the fortification of such an expression.

It was this tell-tale uneasiness, thus evidenced, that amounted to a confession in the minds of newspaper men and officers who have made a serious study of the psychology of such matters.

Had Aimee Semple McPherson simply told her story and stuck, the beginning would have been the end. The aftermath would never have come. Thousands would never have believed it, but these thousands would have silently passed it by. God works in a mysterious way indeed. He refused to permit Aimee Semple McPherson to pass it by. He thrust the banner of a great doubt into her hands and she lifted it aloft and held it there. Others might forget it. He would not permit her to forget.

"If you believe my story, say 'hallelujah'," became the challenge of every public appearance in the days that followed the triumphant return of the idol of the thousands.

"Those who believe my story, please lift your right hands." Thus the vote was taken. Over and over it was taken. Night after night, the same people were called upon to lift their hands. It seemed that some kind of ghost was stalking through the soul of the strange

woman, for the vote of confidence of one day would not suffice. It must be repeated on the morrow. As the days passed, men wondered if the vote of confidence was an effort to still the voice of an accuser which the ears of men did not hear! She seemed troubled, uneasy, deeply worried, until the "hallelujah" sounded or the sea of upraised hands assured her.

Aimee Semple McPherson had deceived thousands. Herself she could not deceive!

"What is that strange, weird, horrible force that drives the man of blood back to the soaked sod where his victim fell?"

A dozen times since the woman of mystery came, with the splendor of a conquering queen, back to her Temple, the "ghost that would not down" has seemed about to die. The name of the "evangelist" faded from the front page. The excitement subsided. The insistent multitudes quieted in their demand for the truth, and the skies over her head cleared.

But in every instance it was Aimee Semple McPherson who insistently demanded that the black clouds of doubt be kept in the heavens. Just as the people would forget, she would refresh their memory. A cabin would be discovered and identified. She would receive a penitent letter from dear, heart-broken "Rose," asking for prayers and forgiveness. She would talk with "Steve" over the telephone or identify his photograph. She would fold a "double" or two to her heart or take the sister of Miss X in to share her private bedroom.

It was the "evangelist" who kept returning forever to the "scene of the crime." It was the "evangelist" who would not let the public forget!

The radio was her undoing. Some things that sound warm and close, when a magnetic woman stands a few feet away speaking with the appeal of a trained artist, sound cold and far away and almost clammy when there are a few miles of thin air between.

A splendid illustration is to be found in the "fake"

healing of herself which she so spectacularly staged immediately after her threatened arrest. On the day when she was summoned to the District Attorney's office, she was reported to be very sick. A doctor was called in, a somewhat amazing step for the "healer." Also, the plot was almost as amazing for the doctor. The doctor summoned is said to be a very warm friend of certain of her leaders. The day the complaints were issued, she was said by her mother to have a raging fever. It was announced that her trouble began with a pimple on her nose. It was also announced that a pin prick was responsible. Her mother stated that the trouble came from the terrible persecution by her foes. Her little daughter innocently stated to a group of workers that it was a bee sting. Anyway, a great sympathy spread for the fair lady at death's door. At least, that sympathy spread until it was learned that not a day had passed through this "awful sickness" that she did not appear before her Bible School or some other group, fully dressed, showing no signs of such a sickness as was being advertised, and deliver one or more addresses each day.

On Friday and Saturday of this "lingering in the valley of death," for the "evangelist" declared that she did not call for the doctor until she had "felt the touch of death" upon her, her physician had stated that her condition was practically normal. On Saturday night, she appeared in the "healing service" in the most spectacular manner, leaning upon kind friends who assisted her to the platform. In a voice so weak that it could scarcely be heard, she stated that she was physically unable to climb to the 500 room for an admission card (all applicants for healing must secure admittance cards from leaders in the 500 room; it is by this process that those to be "healed" are hand-picked), but that she wanted the Elders to anoint her and pray for her healing. (Mrs. McPherson had no Elders during the first year in the Temple.)

The anointing took place and the prayer began. There was a situation as tense throughout the Temple as men

had ever sensed. Every move and word was white-hot with hypnotic suggestion. Suddenly, Mrs. McPherson sprang forward, danced over the platform, praised God in a voice that rang all over the building, announced herself perfectly healed and preached for almost an hour. On the Sunday following she preached three times with her old-time voice and physical strength.

To those who watched the scene at close range, there was a tremendous appeal. The acting was perfect. The stage setting was complete. The whole thing was staged as artists stage their performances. They yelled and went wild. But to the many, out over radio land, it was the last word in duplicity. The fact that it was another hoax struck home with the emphasis of a lightning flash. The radio refuses to carry the hypnotic power by which such things are "put over" in the Temple.

If any thinking man had doubted the deceit that is practiced in the Temple, this "healing" served as a final barrier to all faith in the honesty and genuineness of this mother and daughter, for the night before the "healing" Mrs. Kennedy had prophesied the healing of Mrs. McPherson. Both were equally guilty of this latest hoax.

It is not our purpose to discuss the blasphemy of such a pretension as I have described. It is our purpose to show how the radio has told the truth when from the platform a terrible falsehood was being put over.

Thus, when Mrs. McPherson has announced a new hut, a new "Rose," a new "Steve" or a new "Miss X," the cold, metalic radio has seemed to literally scream, "Another hoax!"

This has been the process by which Mrs. McPherson has builded, step by step, a tottering tower that would of necessity fall upon her and crush her. If there was any lack of proof of her guilt, she has supplied it by that uncanny persistence with which she has ever and forever returned to the corpse.

When I was a lad in East Tennessee, there occurred a most mysterious murder. A man's body was found in a deserted well. There was a bullet hole in the body.

There was not even a clue to the identity of the perpetrator of the crime. The whole community was agog with excitement. As the days dragged, it seemed all but certain that the mystery would remain a mystery forever.

However, a keen deputy sheriff hid himself in the woodland, in the edge of which the well was situated. Nor did he go unrewarded. One night, about one o'clock, a man crept through the darkness, approached the well, looked down into its dark depths, shuddered and, turning, started to flee. The deputy sheriff arrested him. In his confession, he stated that he had been back to that well at least a dozen times. Thus Mrs. McPherson has time and time again re-visited the well.

And the thousands at the other end of the radio have watched her through the night!

*"Out, out, damned spot! * * * * All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."*

It was little Joe Ryan, a kind of sharp-nosed trailing hound of the District Attorney's office, who first startled Southern California with a flat declaration that the story of the "Prophetess" was a fake. Long before that, Arizona officers had stated that her story of the journey through a Sonora desert was impossible and that the hut she described was a myth. But the officers in Los Angeles were slow to desert her until Ryan's challenge, "Get Ormiston and you will get the truth."

Then it was that Mrs. McPherson preached her famous sermon on "Run with patience the race that is set before you." The radio was cruel beyond repair in interpreting that sermon. While her enamored audience heard her exhorting them to "Run, run, run" this Christian race, those who listened over the air seemed to hear her calling to a fleeing culprit. "Run, run, run," rang out her voice in its metalic earnestness. A daily paper accused her of having urged Ormiston to flee, and she replied that she would preach to sinners the next

night on coming to Jesus and would urge as insistently the "come, come, come." However, she failed to preach that sermon.

She did radio her appeal to Ormiston, however. She did not ask him to come in person to Los Angeles and face the cruel and horrible accusation that was now spreading everywhere. But she did ask him to make a statement. Within a few hours, air mail service had supplied a letter to both Mrs. McPherson and District Attorney Asa Keyes that the statement was on its way.

Ryan had charged that Mrs. McPherson had been seen with Ormiston up and down the coast at different points. Ormiston's statement, when it arrived, declared that he had not been at any of the points mentioned. He denied the accusation in toto.

And then the story of the bungalow by the sea broke like a storm.

As the facts glared from headlines and leaped from the throats of the newsboys, Mrs. McPherson was dictating her personal story of the "kidnaping." She had employed a nationally known writer to put this book into form. It was to sell by the thousands and the price was to be by no means modest. It was to be her own book, and the price was to resemble the price of "This Is That."

The day the Carmel story "broke," she dismissed the writer with whom she had contracted and, as usual, forgot to pay him for the last three chapters. That book was never finished. However, I have read the five chapters she had dictated. Such boasting I have never perused. Such egotism I have never met before. As the story of the love cottage came flooding over the land, however, she wilted. But she wilted only for a moment.

Within twenty-four hours, Aimee Semple McPherson had gotten her bearings. But she had changed completely her tactics. She was no longer the super-human Canadian woman who could handle a sledge and who was amazed that anyone should doubt her ability to "do" the desert as described. She was no longer the queen of clicking cameras, who boasted that her "kidnapers" were

plotting to steal away only the great, herself and Mary Pickford and their ilk.

She was a martyr; a poor, little, defenseless woman; an humble servant of the Lord, persecuted for righteousness sake. Her heart was breaking. She wished her poor mother were dead; her poor, dear, little, weak mother, who was so bravely bearing up under this terrible load!

In the midst of it, she fell on her knees, placed her hand upon the Bible and solemnly swore that her story was just as true that hour as when she had first told it.

Her people prayed, groaned, wept and believed.

Those who listened over the radio smiled.

Undoubtedly for once she was swearing the truth there on her knees.

It was after the "breaking" of the Carmel evidence that Southern California got its most thrilling shock. It was then that the discovery was made that Judge Keetch, legal advisor of the Grand Jury, was standing like a watchdog for the defense and protection of the "evangelist," as the evidence was being sifted by that body. More than once, he attempted to block the investigation altogether. And when the Grand Jury insisted on doing its sworn duty, regardless of his wrath and threats, he gave formal notice that no report must be brought in. This "conspiracy of silence" is perhaps the blackest spot that has ever rested upon the good name of the courts of Los Angeles county.

Hard on the heels of this discovery came the fact that other Superior Judges were backing Judge Keetch in this effort to shield the "lady of mystery." That the keen mind of Judge Carlos S. Hardy was behind it all, none could doubt. Caucuses were held. Groups of judges met secretly. Everything was being done to thwart justice and the effort had its genesis in the very halls where justice is supposed to be defended.

Then it was that Asa Keyes announced his spectacular conversion. He had stated bluntly before the Grand Jury that he did not for a moment believe Mrs. McPher-

son's story. He had publicly proclaimed the handwriting on the Carmel grocery lists as so clearly Mrs. McPherson's that any layman might see and judge for himself. But something snapped. Suddenly, out of a clear sky, came a completely new Mr. Keyes. Old things had indeed passed away. No announcement was made that he had joined "Rose" as a result of the prayers of the "evangelist." Indeed, thousands thought that something more definite and substantial than prayers had influenced him. Others shook their heads and guessed knowingly that she had not been "sleuthing" him day and night for nothing. Still others decided that the conspiracy among the judges had at last leavened the District Attorney's office.

Anyway, Asa became the advocate and defender of the woman of the green bathing suit. He announced the case closed. He withdrew it from the Grand Jury. He virtually "fired" the earnest little Ryan from the job of trailing the "evangelist." He held numerous conferences with the attorneys for the Temple leader. He took the witness stand for her and testified before the Grand Jury that the evidence was not sufficient. He emphasized the cost to the county of continuing the case. He insisted that, even if she were guilty, there was no law under which she might be punished. He insisted on the difficulty of convicting her of perjury, even if she had perjured herself.

And then it was that the grocery lists were stolen in open Grand Jury and by a woman member of that body. The stealing of the grocery lists seemed to very much delight the District Attorney, until the indomitable little Joe Ryan came forth with photostatic copies with which he, with becoming suspicion of his chief and others, had armed himself. The city stood aghast. Many were convinced that the grocery lists were stolen with the full knowledge and consent of the District Attorney and Judge Keetch. This conviction deepened when Judge Keetch refused to discharge the woman, guilty of the theft, and almost reached the point of explosion when

Judge Keetch in desperation "fired" the Grand Jury just as it was preparing to bring an indictment against Aimee Semple McPherson for perjury.

"Conscience makes cowards of us all."

Through all the excitement that prevailed as a result of such high-handed and brazen methods as I have described, Mrs. McPherson went forward with her services, baptizing hundreds, preaching to thousands and hourly heaping pity upon herself as God's twentieth century martyr. She was Daniel made over again. She was all three of the Hebrew children put together. She was Job, poor, afflicted, tormented Job, except that she was living in luxury rather than scraping herself on an ash heap. She was Peter in prison and Paul looking through the bars of Rome. She was all the rest of them, including Christ Himself. It was persecution, persecution, persecution! But off the platform, she slumped into her chair and wept and shivered.

Certainly, she did not stop to tell her devotees that never in the history of the Christian church has there been an instance of a single persecution of a single saint on grounds even remotely akin to the charges that are being made against the "lady of the latter rains." These giants of the early church were persecuted for righteousness' sake and for their stubborn stand for their God, and not for a kidnaping story or spending ten days in a love cottage.

And yet the persecution claim worked miracles. Mrs. McPherson's friends became her mad champions. She thrilled them more and more with her poor, weak, little helplessness. She was such a little, weak woman. They forgot all about her feat in the Sonora desert, a feat that could not be duplicated by the strongest of men. She was so helpless and poor and needy and alone. She did need them so much. Oh, how they must help her.

And so it was she sprung her "Fight-the-Devil Fund" and asked for a simple little gift of a modest hundred

thousand shining bucks with which to oppose all hell! As I write that money is flowing in like a stream; $3000 had arrived in two weeks. It is coming from some who will need clothes to keep them warm this winter. It is coming from homes that need more substantial food on the tables for the kiddies. It is coming from the poor and old and defenseless. But it is coming, and will come until it is piled a mighty golden heap at her feet.

And as it flows in, cruel men, whose heartless bosoms have no feeling whatsoever in them, have been to the record and have secured the taxable valuations of her property and, like fiends incarnate, without thought of pity for this little, frail, defenseless Canadian hiker, have published those figures. And lo, the lady who came to Los Angeles less than four years ago, penniless according to her own testimony, now owns property assessed in valuation by the tax gatherers at more than $600,000, which would make the actual valuation of her possessions at least a million and a half of shining iron men.

But the poor and needy did not have time or disposition to read of her wealth. She had told them not to read the papers, anyway; that everything that the papers published was a lie. So they gave of their little savings to her "Fight-the-Devil Fund," while the domains of his majesty rang with laughter.

It was the greatest joke the dailies of hell had ever carried!

And while perdition's publicity mediums blazed the headlines, a tired, worn woman sat in her bedroom and shivered some more. Something within was filling her soul with a terrible terror.

For a big, black book lay open on the table before her and her tired eyes caught these words:

"We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we in agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves."

PART III

Kneeling on a platform that was simply loaded with flowers, while the boom, boom, boom of the flashlights and the click, click, click of the cameras told the story of the publicity that was to attend that prayer, a little lady with titian-colored hair piled high upon her head, pleaded with the Lord, as she watched the photographers gather up their belongings and rush away to their respective papers, to lead her out into the great world tour that was now so "providentially" opened to her.

As she prayed, thousands shouted their "amens" and "hallelujahs. Most of those thousands were also intently watching the photographers.

Sitting within a few feet of the woman whose eloquent devotions were mingling themselves with the smoke of the photographers' explosives, was a keen-eyed man. He was not listening to the click of the cameras nor was he watching the newspaper boys as they gathered up their tripods and swept out of the Temple. He was looking straight into the eyes of the praying woman. Suddenly she looked straight into his eyes.

And those who had been shouting "Amen" never understood why that eloquent petition closed so abruptly.

When we sit with our own souls, we are never lonely. If we are right, we hear a voice that gives us great delight. It is the voice of our innermost self. If we are wrong, there is a whispering that will not down. We shrink from it. We draw back as it accuses. We tremble. But on and on, there is ever and forever with us the still, small voice of the accuser.

And when that voice is simply shouting into our heart's ears its deadly secret and we turn to see two eyes gleaming into ours and there is a question mark as high as heaven clearly defined upon the pupils of those eyes, then it is that our other-while calm forsakes us.

That is perhaps the reason why the little lady who arose from that prayer was trembling as she stood alone before her thousands of worshiping admirers.

And the man who had met the eyes of the lady with the piled-up titian hair went out to whisper to other men his terrible doubt. And the whispering of that doubt set the machinery in motion.

But why that doubt?

Herein lies the secret of explosives that have boomed louder than the photographers' flashlight powder ever dared to boom.

Surely a woman who had been snatched from worse than death by the very hand of God; a woman who had been brought back to her loved ones from the hovel of vicious and infamous men, who stop at nothing and stoop to all things vile; a woman who had sickened and become too weak to walk while bound and doped by her tormentors; a woman who had despaired of life and struggled through those more than thirty nights in the horrible agony of that contemplation of the things that were to be unless a half million dollars were paid to her abductors—I say, surely such a woman, delivered and surrounded by her friends, would be praying like a little, tired child, and the genuineness of the thanksgiving no man could doubt.

But this woman was praying with her eyes open and glued upon the cameras that were to display her kneeling form along with the movie actresses and the bathing beauties on the front pages of the sensational dailies.

This woman was praying with the boastfulness of a conquering queen. She was praying of world conquest. She was praying to the people, to the flowers, to the columns of the dailies, to radio-land.

It was too evident for the keen-eyed man to doubt it.

So he asked her with his eyes, perhaps.

So she confessed with hers—perhaps!

Then, also, the keen-eyed man knew the desert. He knew kidnapers. He knew the marks that show through people's eyes and through their voices and gleam up out

of their souls when they have gone through harrowing experiences.

This keen-eyed man had spent two hours for this close-range inspection. It was worth it!

And the lady with the bountiful hair left that Temple platform with her arms full of roses and her heart full of trouble. She must rest. She needed rest so badly. Had she not been so weak that she could not walk across a room less than a week before? Was she not recovering from the most trying ordeal that human mind could imagine? She must have quiet. She must be alone.

And while she sat alone, there stood before her the shadow of the man with the keen eyes.

She leaned close and looked into the eyes of the shadow.

The question mark was still outlined upon the pupils!

The angel with the field glasses was resting just a bit, for all was night in the wierd world and the actors in the tragedy were asleep. Just as his head nodded, the telephone rang and he answered. It was long distance. Lucifer was talking.

"Sight for sore eyes," came the voice from the land of the outer darkness.

"Some celebration for the saint. Not much like the welcomes accorded the Martyrs and their Chief," he urged with a queer sneer in his voice.

"Begone, thou Prince of lies," answered the weary angel.

"Not until the world rings with laughter and jest at this sample of your boasted Christianity," heatedly replied the voice from the night that never lifts.

As the angel hung up the receiver, there was a tear in his eye. "How sad," he said.

PART IV

When certain facts were brought to the attention of Aimee Semple McPherson, while she lay on the hospital bed at Douglas, which facts seemed to discount her kidnaping story, her reply was, "Well, that's my story, and I'll stick to it." If she had stopped there, the thousands who doubted her story would have been helpless.

It has not been the foes of Aimee Semple McPherson or of her Temple movement that have torn to shreds her sensational kidnaping recital.

Aimee Semple McPherson has bit by bit made that story a huge joke to the lighter hearted and a nation-wide travesty to the serious.

When asked to locate the hut in which she claimed she had been imprisoned, she could have said, "Go locate that hut yourself. I've seen it all I want to. I've told my story and I'll stick to it." Such a stand would have been invincible. There was no law to force her to locate a hut. Indeed, public confidence would have been inspired by her independence in relation to that feature of her story.

But the "evangelist" went out to locate the hut and quickly located it, the only trouble being that she located one that was as readily proven impossible as such a retreat. Men who had passed it every day while she claimed she was imprisoned there laughed in her face at her identification and at her intimate knowledge of tin cans, windows and other things by which she had so positively made her identification. And then she made another awful blunder. Having crossed the Rubicon, she re-crossed. She conceded that this hut that she had identified was not the hut. She failed to stick to her story.

Her second mistake was equally disastrous. Instead

of remaining in her Temple and enthusing her people, as she is abundantly able to do, until they will believe anything she says, whatever of disproof might be offered, she secretly undertook a second trip to Arizona, supposedly to locate the shack.

Many believed that second trip was for a far different purpose and especially when the Mayor of Agua Prieta publicly stated that she had on that visit undertaken to keep his mouth shut as to the damaging facts he had unearthed. But, whatever the real purpose, the trip was a dismal failure and a sore trial to her contention.

On that trip she was to prove her ability to walk the more than twenty miles over the Sonora desert without water. All remember the amusing stories of how that proof materialized, and how, after a half hour of actual desert, she "hit" the water wagon with regularity, walking less than a half mile throughout the entire day.

Moreover, that second trip conclusively established the fact that not only could she not identify any hut that had been produced by her so-called Douglas committee, but that she was thoroughly bewildered by the desert, so much so that she could tell nothing of the directions she had taken in her original flight, nor was she any longer certain as to the positive description she had made of the hut. She conceded that she was possibly wrong about the wooden floor and frankly stated that instead of being a hut it might have been a tent.

Her second trip convinced Douglas that there was no hut there, in which she was held, nor had she ever tramped for twenty miles across that desert. So much so, that her reception on this second trip might be termed "a frost," and her leaving for Los Angeles the second time a silent accusation. Her mother, in trying to relieve the situation, asked for a show of hands of those who desired "Sister" to return again, and less than a half dozen hands were lifted.

But Mrs. McPherson was not content to let the hut rest. The question of the hut was by this time a stalking ghost. So, instead of repeating with her magic power

that statement, "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it," she went about the matter of identifying huts without seeing them at all.

Her Douglas committee announced that they had found a hut. They sent her a picture of the exterior. She had stated in her official statement to Chief of Detectives Cline, and under oath before the Grand Jury, that she did not see the outside of the hut. However, that did not keep her from identifying this newly discovered hut. Again she identified the cans found, the window and the inside of the room. This was indeed her third positive identification and her third positive announcement over the radio that the hut had been found. She brought a Baptist preacher, who was serving as the chairman of her Douglas committee, from Arizona to her Temple and had him read an official report of the finding of the hut. The identification was then declared positive and complete.

When asked if she had not best go and see the hut, so as to make her identification a little more waterproof with the people outside her Temple following, who, of course, accepted without question her identification, she replied that she would leave that decision to her officials. Only a few times has she been willing to leave decisions as to important matters to her officials, who have played a very minor part in her Temple movement, but in this she was wise.

Her leaders felt profoundly that she had already had experience enough identifying huts in Arizona, so they gave it as their opinion that it was unnecessary for her to make the trip. Her identification at long range was wholly satisfactory—to them!

And then the man who owned the cabin in question came forward and very glibly recited how he had visited the cabin, together with certain cowboys, all of whom had entered it a few days after Mrs. McPherson's reappearance, and none of the tin cans and other things found by the committee were in the hut when that visit was made, neither were there any signs whatsoever of

recent occupancy or of automobile tracks, such as of necessity would have shown up, had the kidnapers been driving their cars in and out as described by Mrs. McPherson. In fact, when he was through, another hut had "blown up," and Mrs. McPherson became as silent as a new-made grave—on huts!

Then it was that Mrs. Kennedy announced that she was sure the kidnapers had buried the hut in the sand and that it would never be found. The explanation came a little late, but is the most satisfactory yet advanced.

It was Mrs. McPherson's insistence on identifying huts that helped to prove to any doubting Thomas that the hut was a hoax and the whole story a fraud.

But Mrs. McPherson was not content to exercise her gifts at discovering and identifying huts. She must bring forward "Steve" and "Rose" and the nameless man with the sunken chest. It is almost uncanny that a woman so brilliant in her hypnotic skill should make such a blunder.

It would seem that the most unschooled man or woman in such matters would at once know that the public could not be thus deceived. If Mrs. McPherson had insisted, "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it," she could have dismissed the "kidnapers" almost with passing notice. But she refused to dismiss them. It seemed they were ever with her. Within a week after her return "from the dead" she was relating the fact that "Rose" had just written her. She was in touch with "Rose." The dear thing was so sorry. She had been double-crossed, had lost all. The evil men had fled to Texas and left her the bag to hold. Would not "Sister" pray for her? Poor thing!

Very early, Mrs. McPherson felt perfectly sure that "Rose" had such a tender conscience that she would come forward and confess all. Such women usually do. It is always noticeable how tender the consciences of female kidnapers are!

It seemed that the "evangelist," though an expert of experts on swaying her devotees and making them believe anything she says, was not wise enough to know

that the public generally has pretty well defined ideas as to kidnapers. Any layman in the matter of kidnaping could tell you that kidnapers are never prolific letter writers. The ransom letter was itself a great mistake. It was too much letter! And now these letters from "Rose" began to roll in. Strange kidnapers, indeed!

Nor did the public receive the prophetic declaration of the "Prophetess" with any great degree of enthusiasm. Not many kidnapers in the past had rushed forward with the glad and enthusiastic offer to spend ten or twenty years in the pen for the privilege of making good the account of their doings. When Mrs. McPherson assured the startled natives of this our glorious land that the kidnapers were coming and that her complete vindication would undoubtedly fall from their very lips, those natives gasped, and then went off to think it through.

The thinking through process was most detrimental to the good name of the "evangelist."

Especially did the thinking wax warm and illuminating when "Steve," the hard and brutal tormentor, was promised by the "Propretess."

She had talked with "Steve" over the phone! Wonder of wonders! Will miracles never cease? Certainly, she had made a friend of old "Steve." Think how sorry he must have been for having burned her little fingers with his old black cigars. How he must have repented of those brutal threats, this king of a great kidnaping ring that was to steal Mary Pickford next and cash in another half-million off of her!

But Mrs. McPherson was not even modest in her intimate relationship to these felons, who, for the sake of humanity and for the protection of innocent people, should have been behind the bars for a life-time; that is, if they were real persons and not mythical characters. She now boldly told of identifying the photograph of the horrible "Steve." She admitted that "Steve" and "Rose" had recalled certain little things, such as "Rose" having rubbed her neck most of an afternoon, etc., which things could have been known only to "Steve" and "Rose."

There was no doubt but that gentle "Rose" and gentlemanly "Steve" were coming forward, like true men and women should, with the story of the little desert party. Moreover, Mrs. McPherson had promised them immunity even from arrest, much less prosecution. Can you conceive of how thirty-five days' association could have thus bound people together!

One important gentleman was all but forgotten in the bringing forth of "Steve" and "Rose." That was the man with the sunken chest, the nameless one. The "Prophetess" must not have come to know him quite so intimately as she came to know the attractive "Rose" and the princely "Steve." This nameless brother was fading more or less out of the picture. Undoubtedly "Steve" was the leading man and "Rose" was playing over against him with a vengeance.

Nor would the "evangelist" permit the "kidnapers" to come forward with their story and blueprint, showing the roads they had traveled and the description of the two-story house. She couldn't keep the secret. You understand, she is a woman. So she kept the radio hot with the news. "Steve" and "Rose" had drawn a map and she had seen it. What do you think of that? At last she knew every step of the night journey between the two-story house and the hut. Now she could take the doubters to the house itself. The private bath opened directly into her room. The kerosene lamp sat on the table.

And the Temple devotees "drank it up" and "lapped it with their tongues."

Please remember that it was Mrs. McPherson who was daily spreading all this information over the air and through the columns of the paper. It was Mrs. McPherson, not some foe of hers, who was building this tower that looked dangerously down from heaven. It was Mrs. McPherson, not a bunch of anti-Christ persecutors, who was glibly building up the expectations of the nation for the presentation of the towering "Steve" and the modest, shrinking, timid "Rose."

And then it was that the thing in her hand exploded!

Of course, she blamed it on the devil, but, after all, the devil can stand a lot of blame!

When the Carmel matter first broke, it seemed too incredible for passing notice. While few, indeed, believed the story of the kidnaping, as few certainly believed that Aimee Semple McPherson had been to Carmel and had spent ten days in a cottage by the sea.

I doubt if one man out of ten thought seriously that the Carmel matter deserved so much as a dignified denial from the "evangelist."

Many explanations were being given for the falsity of the kidnaping story. One had this motive to suggest and another that. But Carmel was not within the circle of the possible.

I doubt if ever in the history of the world a young man went up against as impossible a thing as Joe Ryan had on his hands when he undertook the unearthing of the "clues of Carmel." True, the public mind was prepared for almost anything, but not for that.

And when he came forward with his affidavits and his exhibits, he met a solid wall of doubt almost equal to the doubt with which the people had come to view the kidnaping story. The District Attorney stood like a stone wall against him. Judge Keetch was annihilating in his opposition to so much as dignifying it with Grand Jury consideration.

Yes, the proof seemed to be there, all right. But the thing was impossible, absurd to the extreme.

And then it was that Mrs. McPherson stepped in. She would not let her "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it" stand. She sent out a carefully worded appeal to Ormiston. She did not ask him to come running to Los Angeles that he might personally face the accusers and dissipate any suspicion that might be lurking about. She was very wise for once. She asked him to send a statement. And that statement came. And what a statement!

The nation gasped, for the man who had solemnly

affirmed, in a letter to Mr. Keyes of the District Attorney's office, that he had never visited any of the coast towns that he had been accused of visiting, now conceded that Joe Ryan had checked his movements to a dot, and that he was the man who had rented the Carmel cottage and had spent ten days therein; at least, that part of ten days when he had not been scouting back and forth between Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Salinas and other points.

Again, it was not some enemy of the Temple or some horrible minister who, because of jealousy, was undertaking to wreck the "four square gospel," who flung this bomb into the arena. Mrs. McPherson had broadcasted her appeal for a statement and here came the statement post haste.

Even then, the "Prophetess" could have returned to her original affirmation and with her bold "Well, that's my statement and I'll stick to it," she might have saved the day, but some unseen hand seemed to be piloting her to her own undoing.

Ormiston had remembered that once upon a time he had read a book which has since that time been portrayed on many a screen. The title of that book and of the picture is "Madame X." Therefore, in his statement, he very fittingly named his companion as "Miss X." He denied that Mrs. McPherson was "Miss X."

Scarcely had the denial "soaked" in until Mrs. McPherson and her mother were assuring the startled public that they were in touch with "Miss X." "Miss X" was broken hearted over her escapade, and especially over the fact that a shadow of doubt now rested on the good name of the "Prophetess." At the proper time she would appear. The dear people got their tangled minds together with as much haste as possible and awaited developments. Over and over the radio carried the story. "Miss X" had been in touch with the Temple attorneys. The newspapers lifted aloft the headlines. "Miss X" was on her way. "Miss X" was the character of lovely girl who could not battle with her conscience long at a

time. She must tell her story or her heart would break.

Please remember that it was not some hard-hearted foe of "Sister" who was bringing forth "Miss X." It was "Sister" herself.

And then appeared the blood sister of "Miss X" and housed herself at the Temple, occupying a room in the "evangelist's" home and even the intimacy of her own bedchamber. Her photographs were in the papers, posing in the most intimate manner with the "Prophetess." She had great piles of dull auburn hair. Their pictures were published side by side, and an expert could scarcely tell the one from the other. More than a hundred dollars had been spent by the "evangelist" in having these pictures prepared for the demonstration, for this sister of the unfortunate "Miss X" was the woman who had been mistaken at Carmel and elsewhere for the "Prophetess." She had been at Carmel attending her sister, who had been very sick and had needed her very much.

Day after day, the public waited. "Miss X" was hiding nearby. Mrs. McPherson had personally gotten the story from the dear child. The "evangelist" declared that there was now no need of her coming forth in person. The disgrace and shame attending such a public appearance must be avoided. She must not be made to suffer as the "Prophetess" had suffered. Mrs. Kennedy insisted that the Temple forces meant to see to it that this dear, pure girl should not be persecuted and hounded, nor should this loving sister who had brought her and hidden her near the Temple.

An affidavit from "Miss X" was presented. Surely, nothing further was necessary. Mrs. McPherson's attorneys were perfectly satisfied that at last their client had been washed as white as snow. The "Prophetess" spoke feelingly of her vindication and publicly thanked this sister of the "little girl" who had been the heroine of Carmel for her Christ-like act in thus coming to her defense.

Somewhere from the past, the public, dazed and half-demented with the complex that had entered into this

startling turn of the tide, seemed to hear the echo of a statement: "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it."

My, if she had only stopped then!

And while the dear people scratched their heads and waited for the next evening's radio message and the next morning's paper, old criminologists were putting two and two together and figuring until the lead was all worn off their pencils. If it were not a woman, they'd say it. But since it was a woman, she must be given the benefit of the doubt.

And as they figured, a whole carload of dynamite exploded.

When the smoke cleared, the "evangelist" sat red-eyed in her bedchamber.

Her attorney was giving out a statement. He said the situation was very embarrassing.

And then it was that the "evangelist" secured a perfectly new attorney, one of the Clarence Darrow type. At last, she actually needed one.

Certainly she could hold her devotees together. That was the least of her worries. The time had come when she had by her own insistence destroyed all hope of hiding behind that splendid ultimatum: "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it."

She had identified too many shacks, had presented too many "Steves" and "Roses," had loved and cherished too many dear, sweet damsels from Carmel-by-the-sea.

Nor was it some fiend of hell in human form, some ministerial tool of the devil, whose jealous heart was full of greenish hate, some anti-Christ who would destroy her preparatory to the second coming of the Lord, that had brought it all about.

It was Aimee Semple McPherson who had destroyed Aimee Semple McPherson.

And she would gladly give thousands of dollars today if she could go back to her hospital bed at Douglas and smilingly say, "Well, that's my story and I'll stick to it."

As it is, while I write, she is raising a hundred thou-

sand dollars for the purpose of buying her way to freedom. No innocent woman ever needed that amount for an honest defense before an American court!

But Aimee Semple McPherson has made no mistake. She needs every cent of it!

"FIGHT-THE-DEVIL" FUND PAY-ROLL

1. $100 per day for detectives for more than 70 days.
2. Expenses for trailing public officials.
3. Fee for great criminal lawyer who would co-operate in producing the evidence.
4. Employing numerous Arizona witnesses.
5. Employing lawyer at Salinas to produce testimony and identify "Miss X."
6. Defraying expenses of party attended by employed witnesses where a round table discussion of evidence was held.
7. Producing doctors for poisoning episodes and publicity for promoting sympathy at proper moment in trial.
8. Paying personal attorney for assistance in attempt to produce fake "Steve" and other fakes.
9. Payment of blind lawyer to bring forth the fake principals.
10. Paying a fake "Miss X," her sister and other assistants.
11. Hotel expenses of scores of witnesses while interviewing attorneys preliminary to testimony.
12. Other incidentals not yet before the public.

Who says it can be done on less than $100,000?

PART V

The Unearthing of the Evidence

The Los Angeles Times forced Asa Keyes to the prosecution of Aimee Semple McPherson. No man ever undertook a task with more loathing. No man in the history of our Courts ever tried harder to avoid and evade.

More than once, Asa Keyes declared the whole investigation closed and more than once it was closed and closed for all time, so far as Keyes was concerned. But the Los Angeles Times did not fail to reopen the investigation every time the District Attorney closed it.

One of the laughable things about this tragic and awful affair was the sleuthing done by the reporters. Every night, the detectives of Mrs. McPherson were trailing Ryan and Cline and Keyes and others that were considered dangerous. And the reporters were trailing the detectives. If you should happen to see Ryan's car driving toward Venice, you would note an operator of Nick Harris close behind and a Times reporter bringing up the rear. It was some procession.

The reporters were also trailing every witness that presented himself or herself. They did not for a moment let up. And they proved themselves far better detectives than those which Nick Harris had on his pay roll. Nick could not cover as fast as they uncovered. The Nick Harris Detective Agency could not proceed with any kind of fabrication or hoax without a bunch of reporters pouncing upon it like a flock of crows.

Aimee Semple McPherson would have long ago been safely fenced in by the program of her attorneys and detectives had it not been for the newspaper reporters And there is something bitter in that fact, for no woman outside the movie business has ever courted the report-

ers as has she. Literally hundreds of times she has posed for their cameras and smilingly given to them the interviews they desired. No sooner was she in the hospital bed at Douglas than she called for cosmetics that she might prepare for the reporters. They would spread her story to the hundreds of thousands, she assured her surprised nurse.

And now these same reporters were hounds upon her trail. The District Attorney could call the case off and did, but he could not call the reporters off. Judge Keetch could fire the Grand Jury and thus prevent her indictment, but he could not fire the reporters. Mr. Wooley, Judge Carlos S. Hardy, Supervisor McClelland and Nick Harris could take a friendly interest and "kind friends" could arrange with McKinley, the blind attorney, but even these brilliant men did not seem to be able to arrange with the reporters. The reporters would not quit.

And thus it was that the Times brought forward Mrs. Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff, the well advertised sister of "Miss X," who had been in training personally by Mrs. McPherson and her mother for the part she was to play, and displayed her in her true role before the startled inhabitants of the land. After two days of grilling, this impostor "broke" and confessed all. She confessed that it was all a "hoax," that an operator of one of Mrs. McPherson's Detective Agencies by the name of Martin had secured her for the purpose of framing an alibi for Mrs. McPherson. She then confessed that her whole story was a concoction and that Mrs. McPherson had been for weeks giving her the "little inside facts" about the Carmel cottage so that she would be able to stand the test of all questioners.

Just as the Times produced the confession of Mrs. Sielaff, the Examiner located her only sister, a twin. This was the "Miss X," according to the story, for "Miss X" was declared to be her sister. But the sister had never been at Carmel and readily proved it. She was a respectable mother, remaining at home and attending to her affairs.

Then it was that one sensational development followed on the heels of another, the reporters digging up practically every new development. Publicity had made Mrs. McPherson. Publicity was now wrecking her. The reporters had "put her on the map." The reporters were now removing her from the landscape.

And the thing that made the people smile was the fact that the Los Angeles Times, the paper that Asa Keyes hated as he hated the plague, now walked up to the timid prosecutor and asked with seeming innocence: "Well, Asa, what are you going to do about it?"

Preparation for the Trial

Mrs. McPherson's preparation for the preliminary trial was splendidly achieved. She employed W. I. Gilbert to defend her. Gilbert is the Clarence Darrow type. He is the bluster and fluster variety. When he has no case, he yells, insults the witnesses, screams at the ladies on the stand and otherwise tries the "shock troop" tactics. He reminds you of a jersey bull, covered with cattle ticks, making a rush through the brush in the hope of losing a few of them. He has featured in many murder cases and other criminal cases where his clients have depended absolutely upon that type of lawyer. Mrs. McPherson was very wise in selecting Gilbert and could only have exercised better judgment had she sent for Darrow himself.

Her publicity over her radio was also splendidly achieved. She announced that the entire movie industry was back of her. That was a master stroke for it seemed to give her a following that would be supposed to be rather unexpected for a great Christian leader. Los Angeles, knowing the movie cohorts, would scarcely figure on them as active allies of the Lord Jesus Christ

in a pinch. She also announced Dr. Frank Dyer her devoted friend, and publicly thanked him for a great service he had held in her honor just before she went to trial. Frank Dyer is the leading modernist of the pulpits of Los Angeles and, according to a former co-pastor, is himself quite an expert on fabrications of one kind and another. The lining of Frank Dyer under her banner as one of her bosom friends was also a master stroke for it gave her supposedly a following among the evolutionists and modernists that was just a wee bit unexpected.

Perhaps the strongest move made by Mrs. McPherson in the matter of preparation was her announcement that she would raise a $100,000 "fight-the-devil" fund for her defense. She stated that one business man had offered her that amount. We suppose she accepted it, for we never knew her or her mother to turn any "filthy lucre" down. If she did, that would make $200-000. She stated that she felt sure a hundred business men would give a thousand dollars each. Later, she asked for a show of hands of those who desired to get in on the thousand-dollar ground floor and no hands were raised. The business men seemed not to be there that night. However, at the end of eight days, her mother announced that $3,000 had been contributed.

The raising of this gigantic fund was a challenge to the prosecution. What did she need with $100,000? Even if, as reported, she paid Gilbert a retainer of $25,000, where would the remainder go? And especially where would this extra $100,000 given her by the rich business man go? No innocent woman ever needed such an amount of money for her defense before a Court and especially no woman with a million dollars worth of real estate holdings in Los Angeles ever demanded that the poor and needy contribute thus to her defense. And yet the fact of such an enormous amount of money to be expended has its weight, for there are more ways of spending money in such cases than the mere hiring of brutal attorneys to browbeat and terrorize defense-

less witnesses summoned by the state to tell what they have seen and heard. It is a pretty safe guess that no jury of twelve men and women can be selected in Los Angeles County on which there will not be at least one who, for a little trifle of twenty-five or fifty thousand, will undertake to hang that jury until the moon changes a half dozen times.

So the announcement of a $200,000 defense fund is not to be despised in an hour like this.

Mrs. McPherson's preparation of her people for the trial was also artistically accomplished. Just as she had plead with them not to read the newspapers, she now plead with them not to attend the trial. Mrs. McPherson has shown herself wise beyond her generation in seeking to keep from her people the actual facts. The preliminary trial would have meant an awful disillusionment if her people could only have read or heard the evidence, but with her exhortations not to thus contaminate their souls, she was able to save most of her devotees to her movement.

On the Sunday morning before the trial she brought out her little daughter, with whom every body sympathizes, and had her weep and plead from the platform and over the radio. It was a most pathetic and heartless thing to do. She then posed for pictures of a new variety for this "Prophetess." The newspapers carried pathetic pictures of her broken hearted face in their issues of the day of the opening of the trial. Every chord that could be played upon, she played upon.

On top of this she secured the co-operation of certain feature writers of the type and character of Alma Whittaker to paint her martyrdom. The Evening Record was filled with it from the very opening of the trial. She was pictured going to her Golgotha. The blasphemy of it did not seem to occur to the newspapers and writers in question.

And yet there is this to be said: The preparation for this trial lacked one thing; it lacked any evidence that would contradict or cast even doubt upon the solid

wall of facts that were now out in the open. Gilbert very cautiously announced that Mrs. McPherson and her mother would not go on the stand in their defense. The whole battle was to be fought along the line of brutality in the treatment of witnesses. Gilbert was to go as far as he could with his uncouthness, his utter disregard of every fine and manly trait that ought to characterize a gentleman, whether in or out of a Court room. This was the line of defense. This was the only line of defense.

Shades of Elijah! Step back into the shadows, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others of that glorious host! Behold a Prophetess and those who have come to her defense!

The Identification

When person after person looks you squarely in the face and says, "Thou art the man," there has come a serious moment in the life of anyone accused of a terrible crime.

Aimee Semple McPherson sat in the Court room and heard five people follow each other on the witness stand, not one of whom failed to positively identify her as the woman seen at Carmel. However, she expressed herself as having a splendid time and enjoying what she characterized as a movie in which she was intensely interested but not personally concerned. She left that Court room to go back to her Temple and call the witnesses "doggies," jumping through a hoop that the District Attorney had prepared for them. She referred to them as "parrots," speaking the words that had been taught them. She openly charged that they had been tutored

and schooled for their part, and intimated that her enemies had paid them money to thus testify.

Only two witnesses of the practically a dozen brought from Carmel failed to make a positive identification.

R. W. Hersey is a retired business man, who has accumulated a fortune, has served as City Manager of Santa Barbara, California, and is respected and highly esteemed by all who know him. He made a positive and unequivocal identification of Mrs. McPherson as the woman he saw walking in a lane leading from the Carmel bungalow. Gilbert, Mrs. McPherson's attorney, subjected him to a most insulting and vicious cross-examination without for a moment shaking his story.

Miss Daisy Bostick, the lady realty agent who rented Ormiston the bungalow, followed Mr. Hersey on the stand and made a positive identification of Ormiston as the man to whom she rented the bungalow. She declared that she was paid $100 in advance and on the day of the arrival of the couple, the remainder of the rent was paid. Ormiston rented the bungalow for three months at $150 per month. He paid the total of $450 in advance and seemed, according to the witness, to have plenty of money, stripping the bills from a large roll. A few weeks previous to this time Ormiston was known to have been without funds. In the mean time he had not been working.

Miss Bostick did not see the lady companion of Ormiston.

Mrs. Jeanette Parks was the third witness and swore that she lived next door to the cottage occupied by Ormiston and his lady companion. She made positive identification of Mrs. McPherson as that lady, stating that she saw her several times while she was in the bungalow. Mrs. Parks is a mother and is highly respected in her community.

Earl Leroy Parks, the husband of the preceding witness, followed her on the stand and made a positive identification under oath of Mrs. McPherson as the

Mrs. Kennedy and Kenneth Ormiston, posing together on the occasion when they lovingly embraced each other and wept together at the "drowning" of the beautiful "evangelist."

woman who occupied the Carmel bungalow. His identification was without hesitation. Both Mr. and Mrs. Parks were subjected to the same boisterous, ungentlemanly cross questioning that had met Mr. Hersey's testimony, but they remained unshaken.

Ralph S. Swanson, a clerk in a Carmel grocery store, was the next witness. He had delivered groceries to the woman at Carmel, had stood in the same room with her in the Carmel bungalow and had talked with her face to face. Without hesitation, he positively identified Aimee Semple McPherson as that woman. He stated that she had asked him to get the morning papers for her and had given him $5.00 and had told him to keep the change. Out of this $5.00 was also to come a small item for sugar and a steak. Again Gilbert roared like a wounded lion but the young man stuck to his story with positive emphasis, irrespective of insults hurled or efforts made to intimidate and drive him from it.

The fifth witness to make a positive identification was Ernest A. Renkert, a truck driver who had delivered wood at the bungalow where Ormiston and his companion were staying. He also made a positive identification, declaring that there could be no doubt but that she was the woman.

Thus these five witnesses followed each other on the second day of the trial and looked Aimee Semple McPherson straight in the eye and told her and the Court under oath that she was the Carmel lady. This they did, bombarded by the insulting tactics of her ruffian attorney and without becoming tangled in their testimony or embarrassed in the position that they took.

And these were the "doggies" that jumped through the hoop, five Americans that have never been accused of a crime, who under oath as American citizens were called upon to state what they knew in a tragic situation without duplication in the history of this Republic.

And these were the "parrots" who had been taught what they must say, these five men and women whose reputation in their communities speaks for itself.

Perhaps there is not a great christian leader in America but that would bow his or her head in shame and never think of appearing before a great audience on an evening following a day filled with such testimony. But Mrs. McPherson appeared. She appeared to charge the Courts with having a huge corruption fund to be used for her persecution and to prepare her people for further developments. Again she plead with them not to read the papers and not to attend the trial.

Our readers should remember that Ormiston himself has confessed his presence in Carmel. He has positively stated that he was there with a woman. He could have been in Los Angeles on the first day of this trial, ready to go to the witness stand and oppose under oath the sworn statements of these witnesses. He could have produced the real "Miss X," if a genuine "Miss X" there be. But on that day the District Attorney received a telegram from him to the effect that although Mrs. McPherson was innocent, he himself was on his way to Canada.

And as the baldheaded man with the limp sped toward the frozen north and put mile after mile between him and the officers in Los Angeles who held a warrant for his arrest, five American men and women pointed their fingers at Aimee Semple McPherson and said: "Thou art the woman."

The Second Day and Failures to Identify

Mrs. Aimee Semple McPherson announced quite gleefully over her radio that the second day's hearing in the preliminary trial was "100 per cent" her round. She was so joyous over the developments of that day that she put on a pantomime in her Temple, mimicing

Here is a portrayal of the many fingers of accusation that pointed at Aimee Semple McPherson as the perpetrator of a gigantic hoax. This shows Mr. Pape of Arizona, who was one of the many that identified her and swore that they saw her while she claimed she was in the hands of kidnapers.

the counsel for the State and producing great gusts of laughter from her audience.

Following the positive identification of the "evangelist" as the Carmel woman by five witnesses, two other witnesses appeared and failed to identify her. One was a brick layer who stated that he had seen the woman at Carmel several times and that Mrs. McPherson was not the woman. The other was a telegraph messenger boy who stated that he delivered a telegram to the Carmel woman. When asked if he saw that woman in the Court room, he answered that he did not.

There were several incidents connected with the testimony of these two. First, William McMichael, the brick layer, not only failed to identify Mrs. McPherson but he also failed to identify Ormiston, though he had seen him more often than the woman and though the photograph of Ormiston is said to be a much more perfect likeness than the be-goggled and be-hatted Carmel woman could have been to Mrs. McPherson, even if she was none other. Moreover, McMichael's attitude was hostile to the state and he showed evident signs of having been tampered with. It must be remembered that attorneys and detectives from Mrs. McPherson had visited Carmel and had seen both McMichael and the telegraph messenger.

Certainly, I am not charging that a few hundred dollars would have been sufficient to cause this brick layer and this telegraph messenger boy to fail to recognize the lady before them. However, it must be admitted that a woman who will promise $5,000 for the production of "Miss X" and pay part of it down, as she has confessed she did pay in expense money; a woman who will pay a blind attorney $1,000 retainer to produce "Rose" and "Steve," as she confessed she did; a woman who will give money to the secretary of that blind attorney after his death, if she would continue the perpetration of the hoax, will not hesitate certainly to hand a few hundred to a poor brick layer and a poorer

messenger boy if they should be accommodating enough not to recognize her in Court.

When Jesse Williams, the messenger boy in question, testified, spectators were amazed at what happened. When told to look about over the room and see if he recognized the lady to whom he delivered the telegram at Carmel, the young man looked at the ceiling, at the rear of the Court room, but did not once look at Mrs. McPherson. He stated that he did not see the woman. So apparent was his deliberate avoiding of the face of the "evangelist" that an attorney called his attention to that fact and the Judge asked him to look again. This time, he peered out of the window, looked again at the ceiling, again glanced hurriedly over the rear of the room and announced that he did not see her. His actions were so glaring that a titter was heard over the room, as attorneys looked at each other in amazement. Whatever may have happened to the bricklayer, who did look straight at Mrs. McPherson and deliberately say that she was not the woman he had seen, it is certain that the messenger boy was purposely evading the issue.

Men who have been accustomed to weighing evidence were not prepared at the end of the second day to agree with the "Prophetess' that she had come out of that day 100 per cent victor, for McMichael had sworn that he saw a green bathing suit hanging on the clothes line in the back yard the morning after the couple had installed themselves during the night in the Carmel bungalow. Later, Mr. Benedict, the owner of that bungalow, also testified that early that same morning he too saw that bright green bathing suit and identified it as a woman's bathing suit. This sensational linking of the Carmel woman to the woman who was wearing a bright green bathing suit both when she was "drowned" and when she was "kidnaped" did not escape the attention of the Court or the public, though Mrs. McPherson completely ignored it in reporting the events of the day that was 100 per cent hers. It was some

coincidence indeed that the "evangelist" should have been seen last at Ocean Beach in a bright green bathing suit and that the very next morning a bright green bathing suit was hanging on the clothes line at Carmel while Ormiston and his love-mate caught a morning nap within the bungalow and, as Mr. Benedict testified, a bottle of milk "cooked" in the sun.

Nor was this all of the second day with its 100 per cent record. Mr. Benedict himself took the stand on the second day and became undoubtedly the most damaging witness that the State had presented up to that time. Mr. Benedict swore that Mr. Ormiston came to where he was planting flowers near his bungalow and told him he wished to introduce his wife. Mr. Ormiston returned to the house and in a few moments brought out a woman for introduction. That woman was not going to town nor did she afterward leave for anywhere, except to return into the house, and yet that woman appeared with a hat pulled so low over her forehead and the back of her neck that the witness stated he could scarcely see her chin. He further testified that she wore large black goggles and was so completely hidden that had it been his own sister he could not have recognized her. He stated that it would be wholly impossible for him to make an identification from what he saw of the woman, but did testify under oath that she very closely resembled Mrs. McPherson in outward appearance, in form and figure, and that her ankles, which he clearly saw, were remarkably similar to those of the "evangelist." Mr. Benedict had stated to the newspapers before the preliminary hearing that he did not personally have any doubt but that the woman at Carmel was Aimee Semple McPherson.

However, Mr. Benedict closed this 100 per cent day with the most damaging testimony of the trial up to that time. He swore that Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff came to him, while she was posing as the sister of "Miss X," and in an attempt to convince him that she was the woman he saw at the time above mentioned and that

she was the woman he saw at Carmel, did tell him many things concerning what happened at the time of the introduction and as to the furnishings and adornments within his cottage that only the woman who was at Carmel could have known. This was annihilating, for even Mrs. McPherson now concedes that Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff was not that woman. Mrs. Sielaff declared under oath that Mrs. McPherson, while coaching her, told her the things and she was to tell Benedict.

And again Mrs. McPherson failed to remember this bit of terrific testimony as she regaled her audience on the evening of her 100 per cent victory.

The Third Day and Mother Kennedy Faints

The third day was not a "100 per cent" day. Mr. Benedict was still on the stand and testified that Mrs. Sielaff could not have known the things she told him about his cottage without being coached. Mr. Benedict swore in spite of the fact that Mrs. McPherson had personally conducted him through her Temple and had shaken hands with him in gushing fashion on the second day of the trial. Mr. Benedict was positive of four things; of a bright green bathing suit on the clothes line, of the fact that Mrs. Sielaff was not the Carmel woman, of the fact that the Carmel woman had instructed Mrs. Sielaff as to the part she should play in the hoax; and that the Carmel woman was so intent upon hiding her identity that she so protected her hair, eyes and face from his gaze that he would not have known her, had she been his own sister.

Another witness appeared for Mrs. McPherson on the third day, declaring her not the Carmel woman.

He was the night watchman. He further swore that Mrs. McPherson's lawyers and detectives had held conferences with him and had shown him a photograph of Mrs. McPherson, which, he testified under oath, showed that she had red hair. This bit of solemn testimony very much amused the newspaper photographers in the court room.

The big feature of the third day was the reading of Mrs. McPherson's Grand Jury testimony into the record. The foreman of the Grand Jury which was fired by Judge Keetch, just as it was on the eve of indicting the "evangelist," appeared and testified that he administered the oath to Aimee Semple McPherson and that she swore that she would tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Then began the reading of what the District Attorney termed one hundred and seventy-five pages of perjury. This document is full of discrepancies that are now recognized by all who have followed the case.

It was during the reading of this testimony that Mother Kennedy fainted.

In this testimony Mrs. McPherson concedes the maintaining of suites of rooms in leading hotels, also having taken rides with Hallenbeck, the Arizona friend, in his car, also the fact of the blame laid upon her by Ormiston's wife for the breaking up of their home and many other quite damaging things that had up to the third day been contained in floating rumors but had not before been made public as actual facts.

The third day lacked a large margin of being "100 per cent."

The Fourth and Fifth Days Bring Sensations

The fourth and fifth days developed the most sensational evidence of the entire hearing up to that time,

when Walter B. Lambert, proprietor of a shirt shop, stated that he saw Mrs. McPherson enter the Clark Hotel on the morning of her "drowning," a man companion being with her just before she entered. He identified the picture of Ormiston as the man who accompanied her. He stated that the "evangelist" carried a brief case with "Aimee Semple McPherson" on it in gold lettering. Mrs. McPherson bitterly denied to her attorney that she had such a brief case, speaking loud enough to be heard all about over the Court Room. Mr. Lambert was later followed by Thomas Melville, the doorman of the Hotel Clark, who stated that he was a member of Angelus Temple and that he prayed to God that "Sister" McPherson would be proven innocent, but acknowledged that he too saw Mrs. McPherson enter the Hotel Clark on the same morning that Mr. Lambert said he saw her and only a few moments later. He stated that she carried a brief case and that the name "Aimee Semple McPherson" in gold letters was on it.

Scarcely had this bomb exploded when Miss Alice Callahan, under oath, stated that she was a maid at the Ambassador Hotel and that she had repeatedly seen Ormiston enter the suite of rooms maintained there by Mrs. McPherson between August and Christmas of 1925. A. L. Denman, assistant manager of the hotel, stated under oath that Mrs. McPherson had occupied the suite of rooms designated by the maid at the time given and electrified the Court Room by announcing that he too had seen Ormiston enter the room. The maid stated that she thought Ormiston was Mrs. McPherson's secretary.

Added to the above, a bellboy at the San Luis Obispo Hotel, where Ormiston is conceded to have registered together with a woman companion, on the night after he left Carmel, swore that the woman attending Ormiston very closely resembled Mrs. McPherson. He was the only person about the hotel who saw the woman, and he only casually. He stated that she was so disguised as that he could not positively identify her.

However, her goggles, hat and other efforts to hide her face were similar, according to his description, to the same things worn by the woman whom Wallace Moore, a Santa Barbara newspaper man, declared made impossible his identification of the woman who passed through that city in an auto with Ormiston.

Into the records of the fifth day was also read the Grand Jury testimony of Mrs. Kennedy, in which she conceded that the enormous wealth in real estate and buildings, which had been builded, she said, through the "love offerings" of the people who believed in her and "sister," were held in her name and in her daughter's name and that she administered the same, allowing Mrs. McPherson for spending money the first Sunday collections and $20.00 per week.

It might be well at this point to refer to the fact that, following each day in Court, Mrs. McPherson has pursued the policy of trying the case over the radio, the radio evidence being very different indeed from the actual transcript produced by the Court Reporter. On the evening of the fifth day, she hurled what was probably the most vicious attack against the District Attorney that has ever gone out over the air, threatening him with exposure as to his private life and otherwise seeking to chill his soul with terror.

Again the radio did what her radio has done so often. It told a far different story to that which her excited and enamored followers received with her standing there before them. As she called upon Mr. Keyes to know if he had always lived clean, whether or not he had made any slips in life, those at the other end gasped. Was this a confession? Perhaps her loyal devotees did not catch the significance at all but those of radioland did not fail to get the full import of it. Surely Mrs. McPherson's radio has been cruel to her beyond repair.

As she stood, after practically two hours of effort to produce sympathy for herself, closing with the picture that she usually produces in her climax, the picture

of her being crucified like Jesus, a great wave of fervor and excitement amounting to mania swept her followers before her, while a revulsion and disgust at the blasphemy of such a defense settled down on radioland.

Thus closed the first week of the trial, a week that had brought the revolting truth unbidden to many a heart that had dared to hope that Christianity might be spared the horrible facts that have, ghost-like, crept through the shadows by way of gossip and evil reports.

The Interim

Saturday and Sunday found Mrs. McPherson trying her case in the Temple with all the cunning of her being; appearing before her audiences four times in her own defense; erecting a rugged cross on her platform and standing before it with outstretched arms to depict in the most blasphemous fashion her "crucifixion." She told the story of the march of the martyrs and held up Aimee Semple McPherson as the last of the marching line and more than once prophesied the soon coming of Jesus, as denoted by the false accusations that were being made against her.

She declared that her people had such faith in her that if an angel from heaven should come down and announce her guilty of the charges preferred against her, they would not believe his announcement, and undoubtedly in that she is correct.

She denounced Asa Keyes as a lecherous libertine, declaring that only such a man could conceive of a woman such as she doing the things that he had presented testimony she had done.

And a strange thing was happening through the

daily papers while she thus stood upon her platform and railed at her prosecutors. The lady feature writers were, with perhaps a single exception, defending her, while the news columns announced evidence as glaring and deadly as was ever produced against a man or woman at the bar of judgment. The only explanation for the defense of this woman that is made by her fellow women through their feature write-ups is that these feature writers possibly do not think Mrs. McPherson's deportment very bad these days. At least there seems to be a fellow feeling quite evident.

In the meantime, two angles developed that seemed to clinch the nails being driven by the prosecution. First, it was found that Mrs. McPherson had registered twice at the Alexandria Hotel during 1926, although she swore before the Grand Jury that she had not registered at any local hotel or spent a night in any Los Angeles Hotel since January 1st, 1926. This act of perjury was clearly established when the hotel register was produced and it was shown that she personally signed her name on May 9th and May 10th, being given room 657. At least six employees about the hotel testified that she spent both nights in the hotel.

The second most vital fact established in the interim between the adjournment of the Court on Friday evening and its convening on Monday morning was that Ormiston was registered at the Clark Hotel from May 15th to the day of the disappearance of Mrs. McPherson. He checked out in the early afternoon of the day she disappeared. His automobile, bearing the license number that has been identified as on it at Carmel, Salinas, San Luis Obispo and other places where seen during Mrs. McPherson's absence, was in a garage near the Clark Hotel. Six of his meals were served in his room and he personally signed for them. Ormiston was registered as George McIntyre, the name he used at Carmel.

This sensational bit of evidence clinched the fact that Ormiston's "Miss X" affidavit was a perjured docu-

ment, since he swears in that affidavit that he was in San Francisco on the day of Mrs. McPherson's disappearance and that he brought Miss X from that city to Carmel.

Thus the net was woven closer and closer about Ormiston and Aimee Semple McPherson while she stood before her loyal followers and led them in "amens" and "hallelujahs." To them she is a saint, a persecuted Prophetess, a chosen vessel of the Lord whom the devil is after because of the great revival she is conducting. But to those who look the evidence squarely in the face and put the facts together, she is a creature of very different character.

Sixth and Seventh Days and the Desert

The sixth day saw Joe Ryan and Alonzo P. Murchison on the witness stand. These men were among the "trackers" who covered the desert after the "evangelist" had landed at Douglas. Ryan was assigned to the case by the District Attorney of Los Angeles County. Murchison, who has been Chief of Police of Douglas, was recognized as the best desert man in that part of Arizona and did his work for the Arizona authorities.

Both testified to the utter impossibility of her story. Certain facts were brought out by both.

First, the condition of her clothing proved conclusively that no such journey was made by the "evangelist" as she claimed.

Second, in her statement she affirmed that she saw no lights to guide her until she was near Agua Prieta. Both Ryan and Murchison testified that the lights from Douglas, from the smelter and from an army post could

be clearly seen for miles, all over that part of the Sonora, the smelters throwing their glare on the heavens to where that light was plainly discernible for fifty miles.

Third, these witnesses produced maps to show that both highways and barbed wire fences were barriers in the way of such a journey as Mrs. McPherson insisted she had taken. The "evangelist" declared that she crossed no roads, nor did she cross any wire fences.

Fourth, both witnesses swore that they back-tracked the "evangelist" from the slaughterhouse to where an auto track was found. There the tracks ceased, showing that she had alighted from the auto and proceeded about a mile to the slaughterhouse. At another point, tracking the auto, they found her tracks where she left the auto and walked to a small cabin, around it and entered it, returning to the auto. This was before she had left it for the slaughterhouse. The auto tracks were followed and it was established that the auto had crossed the border from Arizona, had driven to the point where the tracks led to the cabin and later to the point where they led to the slaughterhouse and then the auto had proceeded back across the border. Both men swore that the tracks were identical with the shoes worn by the "evangelist," even showing the lettering, "N E W" and underneath the letters "Era," which lettering is moulded into the rubber heels of the shoes she wore. This evidence bears out the official report made by the Mexican officers who also made a thorough investigation and announced that Mrs. McPherson had not walked over two miles while she was in Mexico and that she had been brought over the border on the same night that she "showed up" in Agua Prieta.

Joe Ryan, whose courage and honesty in staying by his post in the gathering of the evidence that has woven itself like a net about the "evangelist" merits the praise of all good citizens, solemnly stated on the witness stand that he was convinced Aimee Semple McPherson was a "fraud" and a "hypocrit."

He testified that he entered the case with faith in the woman and her story and was convinced by the facts that thrust themselves upon him as he proceeded. His evidence was straightforward and given with a degree of certainty that was convincing. Moreover, it was noticeable that Gilbert with his bullying methods was unable to shake either his calm poise or his sworn statements.

A further development of the day was the discovery of a second letter to Mrs. Sielaff from Judge Carlos S. Hardy, tangling his already dangling legs more and more in the fly paper.

Wednesday was a day off, so far as the trial was concerned, but it gave its illuminating sensation just the same. The fact that Supervisor R. F. McClellan, whom Mrs. McPherson had endorsed in his candidacy for governor and who received practically 4,000 votes over the entire state, had sought to secure the clothing held by the state and return the same to Mrs. McPherson so that it could not be offered against her as evidence, brought him into the limelight as another of the big political factors that have sought to move heaven and earth for the protection of the "evangelist." This revelation also secured for him a subpoena to appear and testify in the preliminary trial. Up to this time Judge Carlos S. Hardy had been the lonely "statesman" to be grilled, but at last he had found a companion worthy of his relationship to the lady in question.

The "day off" also developed the fact that Mrs. McPherson had sent Mrs. Sielaff to the stores of Los Angeles to purchase a hat and certain other wearing apparel, which at the proper time might be presented as the garments worn by her at Carmel.

The Wind-Up of the Second Week

One sensation has followed another from the very beginning of the preliminary trial of Aimee Semple McPherson and through it all the net has been brought more certainly every day about the "evangelist." As though the Carmel end of the investigation was not damning enough, the prosecution turned to the Arizona end and produced witnesses to prove that her story of desert wanderings was altogether impossible and that expert trackers, who have spent their lives on the desert, tracked her to where she alighted from the car that undoubtedly brought her over the border on the night of her appearance in Agua Prieta.

They exploded her claim that she was held in a hut by kidnapers and left the story of her escape the laughing stock of all sane people.

Thursday and Friday also saw five witnesses on the stand who positively identified Ormiston as being in the Clark Hotel up to noon of the day Mrs. McPherson disappeared, when he checked out, took his car from the garage where it was stored and was not seen again. This proves his sworn statement, that he was in San Francisco at that time and brought "Miss X" from that city to Carmel, to have been false.

A third witness swore to Mrs. McPherson's brief case with its gold lettering, "Aimee Semple McPherson" upon it, which she claims she did not own and states that she has never had a brief case with her name upon it.

Oliver Allstorm, whom she employed to write her personal story of the "kidnaping," swore that she had dictated a chapter to him in which reference was made by her to the two men who lost their lives seeking for her body, this chapter having been dictated several

days before she appeared before the Grand Jury and testified that she did not know two men had lost their lives.

Detective Taylor of the District Attorney's office, who conducted the investigation about the beach, testified to Mrs. Kennedy's strange lack of interest in the "drowning" of her daughter in the early days following her disappearance, supporting the evidence of the keeper of the Ocean Beach Plunge that Mrs. Kennedy seemed much more interested in getting the car home, in which Mrs. McPherson had gone to the beach, than in finding the body of her daughter. His evidence showed that she did not visit the beach personally for practically seven days after the "drowning" and only began to appear there daily and conduct a spectacular search after there was widespread doubt expressed as to the drowning. This also backs up the testimony of a diver employed by Mrs. Kennedy who states that he was to dive every day so as to convince the public that the "evangelist" was drowned.

Oliver Allstorm's testimony as to his sudden discharge, upon the "breaking" of the Carmel story, and the sensational termination of the dictation of her personal story by the "evangelist" as to her "kidnaping" formed a chapter in the hearing that was perhaps the most amusing of the entire trial. The accusation made by the defense that he had written the book of his own volition and was seeking to blackmail the lady was met by conclusive evidence that she had paid him for the production of the first two chapters and had been seen repeatedly with him, while dictating the story.

As the second week ended, strange and nasty stories were afloat as to evidence that would be presented by new witnesses from Arizona, which evidence, it was claimed, would prove conclusively that she was in that state for several days preceding her "resurrection from the dead" and that she was seen in company with a man with whom her name has been linked in damaging fashion and who was supposed in the early stages of

the investigation to have produced a "perfect alibi."

No sooner was it announced that Hollenbeck was to be brought before the court for a sworn statement than he disappeared from his ranch near Yuma, whether to go into hiding as has Ormiston or to perfect yet stronger alibis seems to be a mystery.

In the meantime, Mrs. McPherson appealed to the Ku Klux Klan and other organizations to secure the signing of a million cards protesting against the trial now in progress and seeking thus to bring pressure upon the Court. Sunday found a strong appeal also going out for the "fight-the-devil" defense fund which is reported, as I write, to be lagging in an amazing fashion.

The Third Week Strikes Hard

The third week found Mrs. McPherson sitting in the court room face to face with the woman whom she had taken into her home, fed at her table, permitted the intimacy of her bedchamber and made one of her family while the Carmel hoax was being prepared for the public.

Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff was on the witness stand the major portion of this week and calmly testified hour after hour to the "coaching" which of necessity had to come from the actual "Miss X" of the love cottage, whoever that "Miss X" may have been. Efforts were made by the defense to seek to undermine this testimony by undertaking to show that the sister of Mrs. Sielaff was associated with her in the making of the Salinas affidavit. Few were interested, for everyone knew that it had been proven beyond a peradventure that Mrs. Sielaff was not with Ormiston at Carmel and it had also been proven as conclusively that Mrs. Sielaff had information which only the woman who was in the Carmel "love

cottage" could give. If Mrs. Sielaff had been assisted by a half dozen sisters, those glaring facts would still be outstanding.

The nation now knows and knows to a certainty that Mrs. Sielaff was the tool of somebody and received "coaching" from somebody and that the somebody in question is the real "Miss X." That much no slick and cunning lawyer can ever cloud.

Mrs. Sielaff claims that Mrs. McPherson was her "coach." She claims that when she failed to impress Mr. Benedict with the claim that she was the Carmel lady, she came back to Mrs. McPherson for more information and got it. Strangely enough, the very next day she was ready to face Mr. Benedict and Mr. Keyes with the added details. She convinced Mr. Benedict that she was not the woman he saw at Carmel and she also convinced him that she was in constant touch with that woman. To say that the sister was the Carmel woman would be laughable as there is no resemblance whatsoever between her and the "evangelist," positively identified by five people as being the Carmel lady and partially identified by others. It is also ridiculous inasmuch as during the ten days of the Carmel "house-party" the whereabouts of the sister of Mrs. Sielaff has been conclusively established.

Then where did Mrs. Sielaff get her information as to the picture over the mantel, as to the position of the dark soil and the sand, as to the color of the stockings and slippers she was supposed to have worn when she talked with Mr. Benedict, as to the position of the ice box, as to the wash-board, as to what was stored away in the garage, as to where the silver was kept, as to the coverlets on the beds and as to a score of other things that she was either able to give correct information upon or at least to get information upon for the next day's questioning?

The student of this mysterious and tangled case should never get away from this outstanding fact, now thoroughly proven: Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff was not the

Carmel woman but was in constant communication with her while the plot or hoax was being concocted and the putting over of it attempted. While she was in communication with her, she was a guest of the McPherson home and treated as one of the family.

The third week of the trial found the defense attorney resorting to every trick of the trade in order to shake the story of this witness, yet without success. The best he could do was to tangle her somewhat in the matter of dates which she quickly and without hesitation corrected when her attention was called to the mistakes. However, he did so lose his head as to strike the diminutive attorney of Mrs. Sielaff, a man who weighs practically 110 pounds, though the court bully himself weighs possibly twice that. He also succeeded in swearing profanely in the presence of the "Prophetess of the latter rains," which fortunately did not seem in the least to embarrass her. As the week progressed, Gilbert won for himself the designation, "bully-at-law," a most fitting and apt appellation.

As the week closed, Mrs. Wiseman having completed her annihilating testimony unshaken, Mrs. McPherson placed upon the witness stand a woman of the stripe that has been constantly appearing in her defense. This woman conceded that, although she was married, she took an auto trip to Arizona, leaving Los Angeles for Arizona with two men, one of whom she did not know at all, and the other one of whom she knew only casually. She testified that she was one of Mrs. McPherson's doubles, to the great delight of the little court room, which spent perhaps as merry an hour of laughter while she was being cross examined by the prosecution, as any Court Room ever witnessed.

And the last moments of the week's activities in the Court Room found the defense attorney battling with the desperation of a sinking man to keep back the testimony of Miss Morris of Long Beach, the secretary of the dead blind attorney, who was to have produced the fake "Steve," the fake "Rose," and the fake hut, and whose

activities in that direction Providence halted in a most tragic and unexpected manner. Mr. Gilbert's efforts were, as usual, vain, however, and the last moments found her on the stand and ready with the opening of the fourth week to proceed with her tremendous bombardment of startling facts. She had already laid the foundations of her testimony, showing that Judge Carlos S. Hardy and Attorney Woolley were parties to the conspiracy with which the blind attorney had been linked.

Seven Dead Men

The Sabbath of the Holy God found Mrs. McPherson before her devotees urging them to continued loyalty and planning further the religious war which she has hoped to promote through the Ku Klux Klan. If that war comes, as she is planning, it will mean bloodshed and outrage such as the nation has never witnessed. God grant sane men of that organization may divert it!

And as she thus planned and sent out her defense over her radio, the ghosts of seven dead men joined hands and marched behind her.

There was the brave young diver who went down into the deep after that which was not there, and lost his life. Aimee Semple McPherson calmly swore before the grand jury, months after he was dead, that she did not know he had been drowned.

There was the father of the little children, the man who also exposed himself in an effort to bring the body of the "Prophetess" from the waters and who went home to gasp for breath, to clutch his throat, to look with glassy eyes at his babies and go across the great divide, there to find that he had been the victim of a gigantic

hoax. His children are possibly hungry as I write, but the taxable valuation of Mrs. McPherson's property is still more than $600,000.

Then there is the poor, deluded "crank" who leaped into the ocean to "join Aimee" and found that she was not there. A great effort has been made to convince the public that this death was wholly accidental.

There was the doctor who, rather than face a grilling at the district attorney's office, drank poison, while the discovery was being made that he was a go-between in the matter of Mrs. McPherson and Ormiston and spent several days away from home while the lovers were in their "love-nest," his own family not knowing the nature of his mysterious absence.

There was the blind man, standing upright in the muck—dead! Whether an accident or a planned execution, nobody will ever know. Perhaps it had leaked out that his secret might not keep and therefore—! God only knows!

And there were the two innocent victims who were with him in the car when it did that strange trick, when it dived into the only such pool of muck for fifty miles along that highway.

And there was the writer—no, that's right. I stand corrected. That shot missed.

Only seven ghosts!

Only seven dead men follow as I write.

God only knows how many will follow for some man to write about, for fanaticism is at white heat in Los Angeles today, thanks to a woman who knows how to stir the mob and who is working overtime in that direction.

The Prosecution Finishes

The finishing strokes of the prosecution were nothing less than annihilating. The youthful secretary of the blind attorney took the stand and told a convincing and unimpeached story of the conspiracy in which her employer joined in producing the fake "Steve," the fake "Rose," the fake hut and the fake road map. She told how she took a man who had never seen Mrs. McPherson and whom Mrs. McPherson had never seen, made him up and had his picture taken, which Mrs. McPherson identified as that of "Steve," the kidnaper. Miss Morris also told of this make-believe "Steve's" calling Mrs. McPherson over the phone, and of Mrs. McPherson's saying, "My God, that's his voice. That's the kidnaper." Miss Morris told of reminding Mrs. McPherson of how "Rose" had worked all afternoon on a crick in her neck and Mrs. McPherson remembered it perfectly and repeated the circumstance to her mother, although Miss Morris conceded on the witness stand that she had made the story out of whole cloth.

Step by step, Miss Morris gave the gasping court room the full benefit of a hoax and conspiracy to deceive the public, the like of which has never been unfolded in this part of the United States. And as Miss Morris made her damaging accusation, she looked straight into the face of the "evangelist" sitting before her.

It was shown in her evidence, as in that of Mrs. Sielaff, that money had been paid by Mrs. McPherson, her mother, Mrs. Kennedy, acknowledging that she had paid the blind attorney, McKinley, the sum of $1,000 for his part in the conspiracy. Miss Morris brought out the fact that a proposal was made by Mrs. McPherson to pay the "kidnapers" $1500 expense money and to give her $500 for her trouble.

But even the damaging testimony of Miss Morris dwindled when handwriting experts took the stand and without hesitation swore that the handwriting on the Carmel grocery lists was plainly that of Mrs. McPherson. The testimony went further and identified the signature to a receipt for a telegram by the lady at Carmel as in the handwriting of the "evangelist." Moreover, a list of suggestions as to a proposed "Miss X" affidavit, which list was found in the strong box of Mrs. Sielaff, was identified as in Mrs. McPherson's handwriting. The telegram sent to Mrs. Kennedy from Oakland shortly after the "drowning," assuring her that Mrs. McPherson was "O.K.," was identified as in Ormiston's handwriting, as were various hotel registrations, where he registered with the veiled lady with the eyes that would not stand the light of day.

Many damaging words were spoken during this trial, but none more damaging than the slow, certain, positive words of the handwriting expert as he presented the silent witnesses which never lie and the testimony of which can never be controverted.

As the prosecution finished it was understood that many witnesses that would be used in the trial of the case before the jury were not used at the preliminary trial, as it was thought that no Judge could weigh the testimony already produced and not hold the defendants for trial.

The defense immediately launched into a frantic effort to contradict the solid wall of facts now in the records of the Court and presented their witnesses one by one. Part of the testimony was little less than puerile and childish, while not a single witness offered any positive facts that could shake the horrible skeleton that had been marched out of the closet by the prosecution. As the prosecution closed and the defense began, the usual showmanship of the "Prophetess" evidenced itself, and she made what was perhaps the boldest play for sympathy ever credited to a woman on trial. Claiming that someone had pricked her leg with a poisoned pin in the court room and that she had been running a high

fever since Sunday, when she preached three times, she was carried into the Court room, after the noon recess, on Tuesday of the fourth week, in a chair borne on the shoulders of four men. Though she had been "healed" in a public and spectacular manner of a pimple or bee sting, or whatever it was, only two weeks before, yet the Lord was permitting this horrible poison from the poisoned pin of some lurking foe in the Court room to permeate her system as the defense began to put on its little band of witnesses.

And the tragic part of this little play was the fact that her thousands of followers were on their knees praying earnestly that the Lord would heal their stricken leader. They believed her absolutely. While Los Angeles and the nation smiled and whispered, "Another little hoax all her own," her devoted slaves and followers cried unto God to drive the horrible poison from her system.

On the day following the spectacular appearance of the "evangelist" in her wicker chair, the newspapers announced that she had stated that the doctors had given her up but she was sure the Lord would heal her. That day, she limped into the Court room supported by two men. It was evident that another "miracle" was on the way.

It was at this point that the angel with the field glasses was interrupted by his assistant who asked him if he had read certain words from Saint Paul. He read them aloud:

"Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders."

"Does that mean that miracles and wonders shall be performed by those who are the agents of Satan?" asked the assistant.

"What else could it mean?" was the reply of the angel as he placed the glasses to his eyes.

PART VI

The angel who keeps the record heaved a sigh.

"Only christianity could survive such as this," he muttered to himself as he blotted the last line he had written.

"The pity of this is the fact that the skeptic and critic of the program of Jesus the Christ will now have fertile fields for their challenging condemnation of the whole scheme of man's redemption," he half whispered to an assistant who sat near by.

"Those who hate Christianity will most certainly charge against the real Church this horrible hypocrisy and blasphemy. Thus has the Prince of the power of the air won an advantage that will not soon be dissipated even by the correct lives of those who walk as they profess," he continued.

"The Book of God describes such false teachers and the horrible devastation wrought by them, and yet the blind of earth follow gladly such blind leaders," he announced regretfully.

"Nor is that all," suggested the assistant. "Such conduct from one who posed as a special messenger from God tends to discourage many who are God's own elect, and the hurt of this revelation will not be cured until long after most of the principal actors of this tragedy are in their graves."

"True enough," answered the angel with the golden pen staff in his hand, "but it were better by far that such hypocrisy and false pretension be exposed, so that God's people might in future days be warned to be more watchful, than that lack of exposure should leave them free to continue their havoc within the church."

"What terrible impositions have been practiced in the name of the Christian religion!" exclaimed the angel

with the field glasses, as he rested his eyes for a moment. "They are just now adjourning Court so that the 'Prophetess' may be carried out to prevent a breakdown. And yet this is the same 'Prophetess' whose marvelous healing power has cured enough cancers, goitres, tuberculosis, epilepsy and other diseases to keep the testimonies going on the platform almost by the week. And to think that a little over a week ago, she was miraculously healed of the same thing that she now claims is bringing her near unto the gates of death. I wonder what kind of idea her followers and friends have of a Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever, anyway?"

"Physician, heal thyself," smiled the assistant to the Recording Angel.

"Yes, but when the Physician is feigning his sickness, then what?" questioned his chief.

At that, the angel with the field glasses resumed his watch and reported that four men were carrying the stricken "Prophetess" from the Court room.

The angel who keeps the record resumed his writing and the assistant turned back to study the record of Alexander Dowie, Mary Baker Eddy, "Father" Russell, and other luminaries.

Then it was that the librarian appeared and began to read the twilight lesson. His voice droned out with a peculiar and weird emphasis:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

For a moment his droning voice was hushed. Then again he said, as the twilight deepened:

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things."

Then it was that the angel with the field glasses looked over the list for the second time: "High powered cars; a stable of horses; beauty parlor fees; silk gowns

that stun a great city; underwear of fabulous prices; suites of rooms at millionaire hotels."

But the librarian had borne the great book back into the big gray building on the dome of the hill.

On pages 109, 273, 562 of the records are to be found the following lines:

No Patriarch, Prophet, Apostle, Disciple or Martyr has as yet been discovered and his record brought to us for inscription, who has builded for himself a fortune from the profits of his service of the Living God. Only the wolves that have fed upon the fold have thus profited. The acquiring of more than a million dollars in earthly wealth from four years of gospel ministrations is an impossibility. Those who thus enrich themselves can not possibly be the servants of the Most High God.

Nor have the Martyrs and those who went before them enjoyed the luxuries of life. It is not fitting that they should wear purple and fine linen. I fail to find in all these records the story of one mighty servant of Jehovah who impressed the world with his wealth.

Moreover, nowhere in these pages do I find recorded a single instance where one of God's Holy Messengers has been accorded the acclaim and welcome of a worldly multitude. The "headlines" have not belonged to them. Their portraits have not adorned the scandal sheets of their day and generation.

And it might be well, also, to pen at this time a fact that should be remembered, that not yet has one of these glorious messengers of God so deported himself as to give rise to all kinds of gossip, scandal, rumor and vile report. They have been persecuted, but always for righteousness sake.

Signed: The Angel Who Keeps The Record.

PART VII

The hour of vindication had come!

The prosecution had closed its damaging chain of conclusive evidence and the "bully-at-law" prepared for the unleashing of the witnesses that would crush the solid wall of seeming guilt and blaze a path to freedom for his client.

The "Prophetess" announced that her courtroom sickness had come from the atmosphere of doubt that had pervaded the trial and that is perhaps one reason why on the night preceding the opening of her defense, she lifted the ban and announced that her slaves might attend the trial until further notice. She had insisted persistently that they must not attend while the prosecution was building up its evidence.

And yet she was just a bit premature in thus throwing open the doors to her followers, for her star witness, Mr. Cross, the first man in Arizona to announce the impossibility of her desert story and whom she had later employed to track her, did not bring the comfort expected from him under cross examination. Although he had sworn with seeming alacrity on direct examination that the "Prophetess" could have made the twenty-mile trip over the desert, he confessed when under the pointed questioning of the prosecution that it would have been practically impossible for her to have made six hours of that journey through a dark night. He also conceded that she could not have made it without crossing a wire fence six feet high and a new road, both of which she swore before the Grand Jury she did not cross. He further conceded that she could not have made it without sighting the lights of Douglas at least seven miles away and her sworn statement was to the effect that no such lights were seen. And then to complete the discomfiture

of this the first witness, the prosecution insisted on knowing whether or not he was to receive remuneration for his testimony. Twisting and squirming like a school boy before an irate teacher, he at last conceded that he was on the pay-roll of the "Fight-the-Devil" fund and had been employed to come to Los Angeles to testify, that he had spent much time at the Temple and at Mrs. McPherson's home since coming to the city and had held numerous conferences with the "evangelist" and her attorneys as to what his testimony should be. Thus the man who had changed his story so materially between the time he first made public his statements after the "resurrection from the dead" and his appearance on the witness stand drew down his pay and departed, having left the "Prophetess" in a much more serious "pickle" than that in which he found her.

And the testimony of the mighty Cross was very much on a par with the testimony of other defense witnesses from Arizona, all of whom confessed that they were being permitted to carve chunks off the "Fight-the-Devil" fund and were testifying for pay. Indeed, the mighty Gilbert himself gave up the "famous desert trapper" and acknowledged that his evidence was "the bunk." The Mexicans who conceded that they had "just happened" to leave their light burning after midnight, which light had drawn the "Prophetess" into their garden where she found a soft place to swoon, were an embarrassment to the defense, although the kind lady of mystery had taken up a collection for them at the Temple to add to the remuneration already stipulated. Gonzales himself had conceded that the lady seemed to desire no water after her trying desert hike, but his wife went him one better and stated under solemn oath that it was practically two and a half hours after the arrival of the "Prophetess" before she consented to drink a single drop of water. The Mexican and his wife flatly contradicted each other and left the gasping crowd in the court room wondering if the home of Mr. Gonzales had not been selected for the shelter of the "fugitive" some time before her arrival.

A most amusing incident was the presenting of a witness, also of the employed variety, who swore that his baby had walked four miles over the desert in her baby slippers. This expert testimony brought forth a genuine peal of laughter from those present, even the mighty Gilbert smiling. He had actually done better than he expected.

It appeared from the beginning of the presentation of the defense "evidence" that the "evangelist" was not to be embarrassed by the past. She advertised Mr. Cross from her platform as having vindicated her, although his evidence and former statements made her desert story the joke of the season. Moreover, she presented the saloon keeper, Gonzales, for an address before her audience, although he had only a few hours before confessed under oath that he had made a sworn statement, just after her re-appearance, to the effect that the "Prophetess" had told him she had only walked seven miles in the desert and had been put out of an auto at the beginning of the journey. To cap the climax, her next Sunday's Bulletin carried the announcement that this Mexican saloon keeper and his wife had been received into Angelus Temple as associate members.

Judge Carlos S. Hardy was undoubtedly the best witness that Mrs. McPherson placed on the stand. It was up to him! If she was guilty, he was guilty. That much was evident. His tracks had been found all along the path. Therefore, he swore that he believed her kidnaped and denied on the witness stand all the evidence introduced to connect him with the conspiracy.

Two terrific facts developed on cross examination: First, Judge Hardy confessed that he had not believed the entire story of Lorraine Wiseman Sielaff when she came to him insisting that she was the Carmel lady and in this confession he branded himself as a conspirator with her in attempting a gigantic hoax, for his friendly and almost affectionate communications with her are now exhibits before the Court. Second, he acknowledged in his evidence that he was either a party with the blind

lawyer in seeking to protect real kidnapers from punishment and in offering to them immunity, or else he was a party in seeking to produce fake ones. Long Beach officers solved this angle by appearing for the defense and swearing on cross examination that McKinley had told them that Mrs. McPherson was neither drowned nor kidnaped.

Then appeared Constable Ash of the Arizona desert, another man who, upon Mrs. McPherson's re-appearance, declared her desert story absurd and ridiculous, but who since that time has been given the privileges of the "fight-the-devil" fund and came to the witness stand to tangle himself into a veritable web of contradictions in an effort to extricate the lady "evangelist."

Thus the procession proceeded. As the case closed, certain facts stood out undenied. Ormiston, who could clear up the whole tangle in five minutes, was still a refugee from justice and in hiding and all knew that his hiding was for the defense of the "Prophetess." Whether Mrs. Sielaff is a liar or not and whether her sister signed the Salinas affidavit or not were questions for differences of opinion but none could differ as to the fact that it was while Mrs. Sielaff was sleeping in the bed of Mrs. McPherson, eating at her table and being counted one of her family, that somebody was telling her of the little things that she must remember about the little house at Carmel in order to convince Mr. Benedict that she was the lady who was so intent upon hiding her identity at the sea-side bungalow. A positive identification of the handwriting of the Carmel grocery lists as in Mrs. McPherson's handwriting remained as incriminating as the testimony of the same experts developing the positive and undenied fact that it was Ormiston who wrote the telegram that came to Mother Kennedy from Oakland and assured her of her daughter's welfare while she was supposed to be drowned. A long list of positive identifications of the lady "evangelist" stood impregnable.

Nor was this all. The fact that money had been paid to Mrs. Sielaff, her sister, the blind attorney, Miss Morris

and other chief actors in the attempted production of the hoax, remained as brazenly accusing as was the fact that the "Prophetess" had spent the "fight-the-devil" fund almost recklessly in hiring Mexican saloon keepers and "desert rats" to testify in her behalf, it being conceded on the witness stand and by the "evangelist" that a Mexican saloon keeper had been paid practically $600 for his testimony.

As amazing as the above was the evidence, uncontradicted, that Mrs. McPherson had positively identified a man's voice over the telephone as that of "Steve" and had as positively stated that a photograph handed her was his. The voice and the photo were acknowledged to have been frauds. Added to this was the amazing announcement through the papers that the "Prophetess" was not to be placed on the witness stand to contradict and explain the tangled web that had been woven about her. Los Angeles gasped as she read this admission. Thousands had counted on the brilliant personality of the hypnotist for a vindication. Her attorneys seemed to think otherwise.

Thus closed the famous preliminary.

Lies! Lies! Lies!

Perhaps a trial was never held in which as many had been told.

Perjury! Perjury! Perjury! The very Court Room had echoed with it.

Who were the liars? Who were the perjurers?

The angel who keeps the records was writing with a quick, steady stroke as his fellow peered through his field glasses and dictated.

It was indeed a group of celebrities that had gathered in the reception room of the observation tower where the angel with the field glasses sat at his open window. Daniel turned to Meshach with a smile and remarked:

"I note by the morning papers that we have a rival

indeed in yonder world, one who claims that lions' dens and furnaces of fire are playthings beside the instruments of persecution that are being used in making her the most famous martyr of the list."

Meshach did not answer but St. Stephen smiled knowingly and, walking to the open door, beckoned to St. John who was talking to Peter on the portico. The two entered and were seated.

"John," began St. Stephen, "haven't I read somewhere something about a bunch of frogs you wrote a treatise on?"

"Certainly," replied the "Beloved." I think I can quote you the verses. Here they are":

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the Kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

"Well, the miracle workers are surely busy these days," ventured Daniel.

"I understand there are at least thirty-two varieties in the one city of Los Angeles, California," remarked St. Peter.

At that, the angel with the golden pen staff thumbed his records for a moment and, addressing the visitors, read the following notation:

"In the midst of the so-called services, she compared herself with Jesus Christ Himself, declaring that her persecutions rivaled His. Then she walked over to where she had caused a rugged cross to be erected and stood before it with outstretched hands so that the thousands before her seemed to see her crucified on the cross."

"I have pages on top of pages of such stuff," he said with a note of sorrow in his voice as he closed the book.

"But what I want to know," questioned St. Stephen, "is what those frogs really were that came forth from the mouth of the false prophet?"

All turned their eyes toward the beloved disciple.

"They might have been greed for gold, lust of the flesh and plain lying," answered John, "but they were not. However, such are the characteristics of the false prophets. Their itching palms are easily understood. Their flesh is master. Their lying lips bring shame and reproach. But—"

At this point, the angel who peered through the field glasses interrupted.

"Her friend, the Judge, is just now sentencing a boy to the penitentiary for passing a bogus check for $63.50 and if you will turn on the radio, you will be able to hear his annihilating verdict."

Daniel bade the company good-day, remarking that he for one had heard that Judge several times too many, already.

Isn't that the same Judge who sentenced the boy to the Lunatic Asylum when the youngster undertook to sell books about Angelus Temple, which books exposed the "Prophetess?" queried St. John.

"Certainly, she has worked through him consistently in protecting herself," answered St. Peter.

"And to think that the poor boy, realizing that he was going to be kept in the mad house forever, committed suicide," remarked St. Paul, who had thus far kept silent. "I tell you my remarks on women preachers are looming up with more significance every day."

"I wonder how many have gone to the mad house from Angelus Temple?" asked St. John.

"And how many have committed suicide? And how many have died from the reaction of supposed healings? And how many have found their faith wrecked as the horrible deceptions have dawned upon them?" emphasized St. Peter.

"How sad! How sad!"

They turned. The little company quickly arose.

For He, with the marks of thorns on his brow, stood in the doorway and the glint of a tear was in His eye.

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